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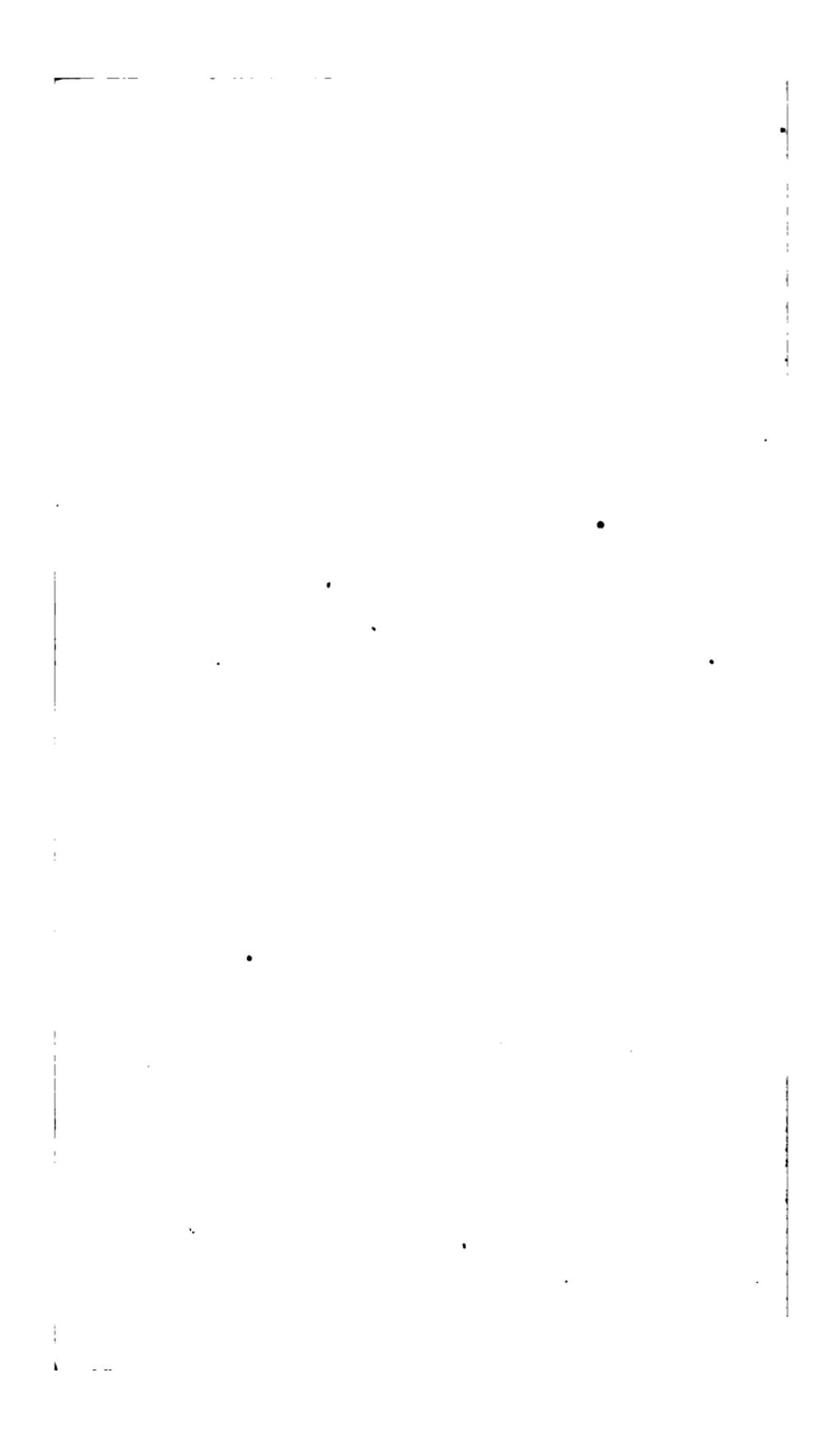
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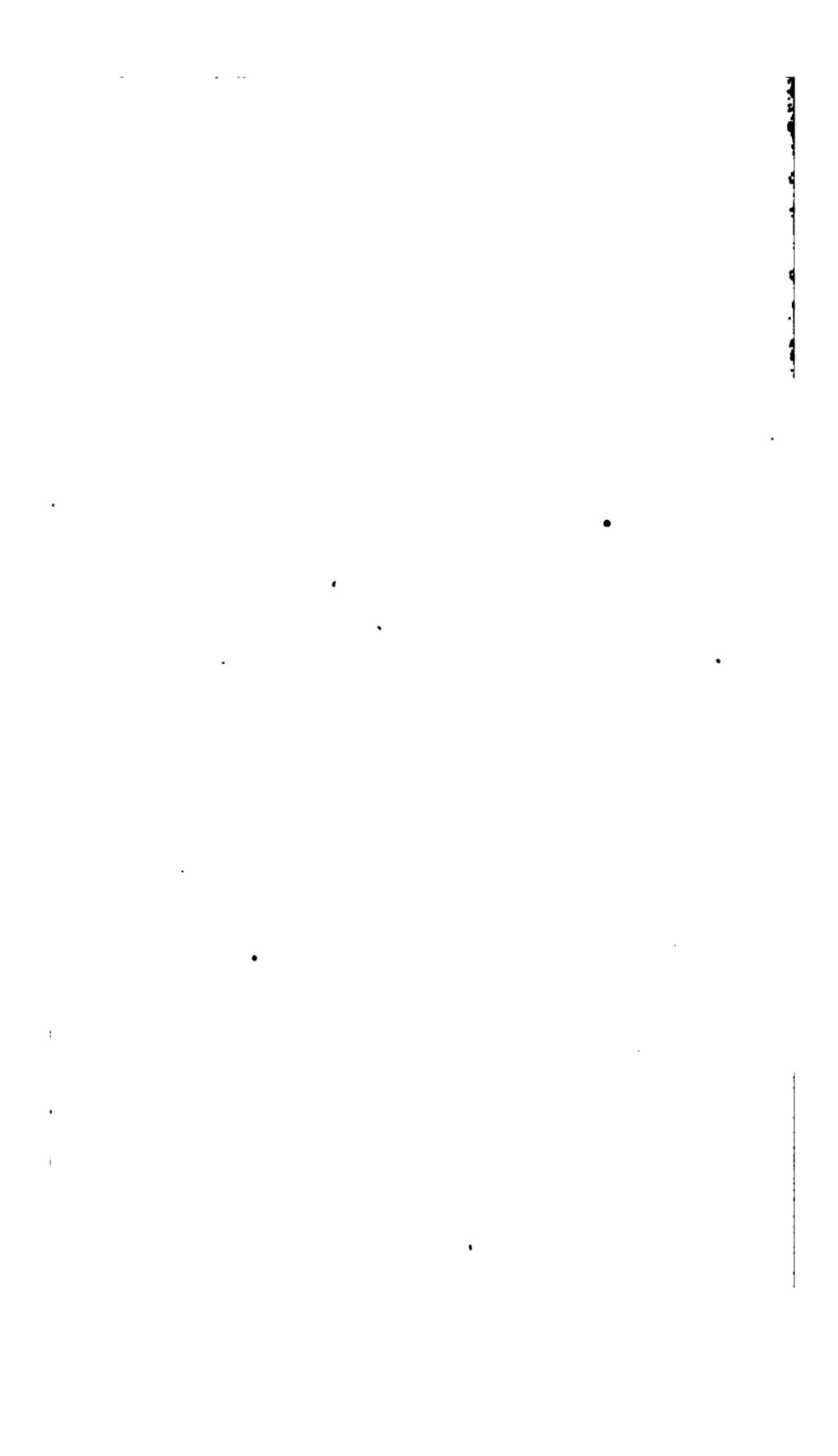






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E. 1832.

COBBETT'S

MANCHESTER LECTURES,

IN SUPPORT OF HIS

FOURTEEN REFORM PROPOSITIONS:

Which Lectures were delivered in the Minor Theatre, in that town,
on the six last days of the year 1831.

TO WHICH IS SUBJOINED

A Letter to Mr. O'CONNELL, on his Speech, made in Dublin, on the
4th of January, 1832, against the Proposition for the establishing of
Poor-Laws in Ireland.

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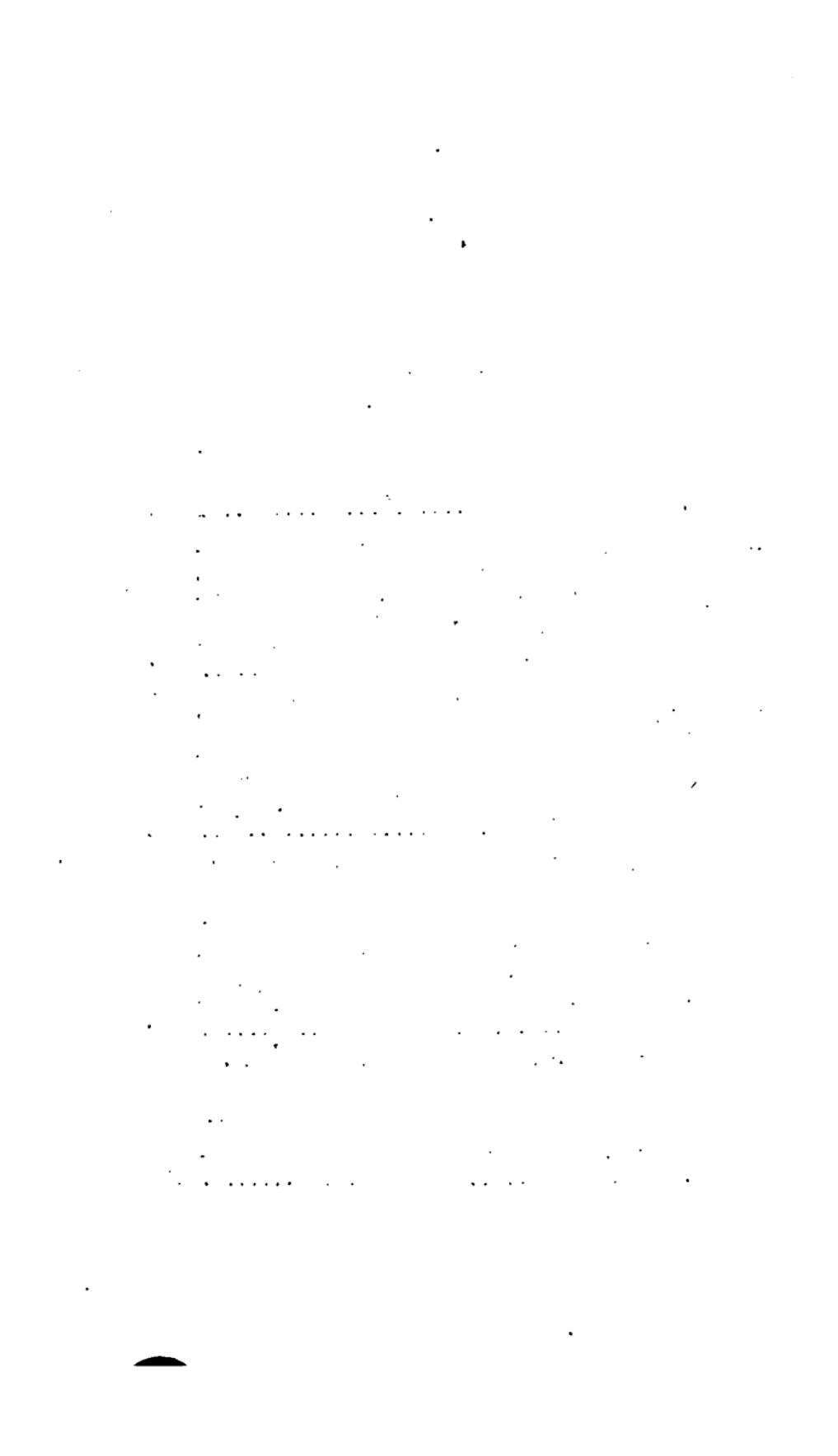


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P R E F A C E.

HAVING in the month of August last received from a committee of gentlemen at Manchester, who from their state in life would be *electors* in that town if the Reform Bill then before the House of Lords became a law; having received from this committee an invitation to become a candidate for the representation of this great town, I answered it by expressing my gratitude for the honour conferred on me by the invitation; but by stating, at the same time, that I must decline even such great glory unless those who choose me would pledge themselves, in the firmest and most solemn manner, to stand by me and support me to their utmost in my endeavours to cause to be adopted certain great public measures, which I plainly described to them in ~~THIRTEEN~~ (since become *fourteen*) distinct PROPOSITIONS.

The House of Lords rejected the first Reform Bill; but a second being now before Parliament; it being certain that a Reform must take place; and it being also certain that there can be no Reform without Manchester having members allotted to it: under these circumstances, I thought it my duty to lay before the people of Manchester the *facts* and *arguments* upon which my

propositions were founded ; and it appeared to me that the way to do this in the most respectful, and at the same time the most frank and effectual manner, was to come hither in person, and to do it in their hearing, and to their faces.

This I did, as is stated in the title-page, in SIX LECTURES, delivered on the six last days of the last year. The subjects are of the greatest importance ; the crisis is such as the country has not been in before since the reign of Charles the First ; my opinions are by many persons deemed worthy of great attention ; justice to my own name and fame demands that I give proof of the sincerity of these my opinions, and of my desire to see my propositions adopted ; and as I cannot give a better proof of this sincerity than would be given by putting into print, and by publishing, under my own name, a *report of these lectures*, I hereby put them into print, and send them forth to the public.

They were not in fact *lectures* but *speeches*, having in every case been made from *notes*, not exceeding in any case the space of one side of half a sheet of quarto paper. It is understood of course that these are reports of the *substance* of the speeches, each of which was at the least *two hours long*. Nevertheless I have, in these reports, retained all the principal *facts* and *arguments* : I have written them out with all due consideration : and I here put forth that by which I, with regard to this great matter of Reform, mean to abide.

I ought here to explain a thing connected with this matter which, if left unexplained, might operate unjustly towards the Earl of RADNOR. That nobleman, upon hearing that it was the intention of the reformers of Manchester to put me in nomination as one of their members, wrote a

letter, of which the following is a copy, to Mr. WHITTLE,
the zealous and able Editor of the MANCHESTER AND
SALFORD ADVERTISER.

"Longford Castle, Aug. 20th, 1831.

"DEAR SIR,

"I was much pleased to learn from your paper, that it was determined to propose Mr. Cobbett for the representative of Manchester at the first election under the Reform Bill; and still more so to learn from yourself that there is reasonable ground to hope for success.

"Though I was deferred, by reasons which are not unknown to you, from returning Mr. Cobbett at the two last elections for Downton; yet I have never ceased to regret that he was not a Member, and to believe that his presence in the House of Commons would have been essentially useful. These feelings increase with the increasing embarrassment of affairs—embarrassments which he has so long foreseen, and so accurately foretold; which he has clearly traced to their origin; which he is therefore more likely than any other person to be able to devise a remedy for, and for which he has repeatedly pointed out the remedy, especially in the Norfolk petition. To the necessity of adopting such measures as are there proposed, I, instructed by him, have been long alive; and within the last few months, public opinion has taken such a turn, that I think (why do I say I think? I am sure) that very many persons are now prepared for those of them which, when first propounded, appeared the most startling and alarming.

"That converts to his doctrines will fast increase: I have no doubt; some turning to him and avowing their adhesion, others adopting his opinions without owning, even to themselves, that they have become his disciples. His active exertions, therefore, become daily more desirable, and more likely to be useful.

"With these sentiments, I cannot but feel that the people of Manchester, by choosing Mr. Cobbett for their Member, do themselves great honour, and the state great service.

"Of course, I must be anxious for your success. Even under the Reform Bill, I suppose some expense will be to be incurred! If any arrangement for a subscription is made, pray put my name down to it; or if, as I am not known in Manchester, and have no connexion with that place, an anonymous subscription would be better, enter me as 'An old Cobbettite;' I will send you 50*l.* in the first instance; and, when the time comes, if there is a necessity, I shall not be unwilling to add a second subscription.

"With respect to the measures which ought to be adopted, I have no hesitation in saying, that my decided opinion is, that, for the safety of the state, the internal peace of the country, the well-being of the people, the preservation of property, and the

maintenance of anything like liberty, measures must be adopted to the full extent of any that have ever (as far as I recollect) been proposed by Mr. Cobbeit. I am persuaded that he has all these objects sincerely at heart.

“I wholly acquit him of any personal ambition, except probably that anxious desire for fame, and that wish to live in the grateful recollection of his countrymen, which are the signs of an exalted and of a noble spirit. Sordid views of interest he certainly has none—no petty ambition. The good of the people is what he seeks; his fame—the mere fact of his being thought of to represent Manchester—is the assurance that he has the means of promoting it.

“For the sake of the country, of all orders in the state, from the highest to the lowest, I wish you success.

“I am, dear Sir, faithfully yours,

“RADNOR.

“To J. Whittle, Esq., *Advertiser Office, Manchester.*”

Now it should be observed, that this letter was written before his Lordship could have seen or known of my *present Propositions*. The first that I heard of this letter was from a friend in Hampshire, where I was in the early part of September; and my *PROPOSITIONS* were *not then in print*. My Lord RADNOR therefore, by this his letter, gave his sanction to no propositions or opinions of mine, beyond what were expressed in the *NORFOLK PETITION*, which he, in his place in the House of Commons, had defended in 1823. Being uncommonly anxious that no ground of misrepresentation of my Lord RADNOR’s conduct should be given by any act of mine, I here insert the *NORFOLK PETITION*, that the public may see the difference between the propositions contained in it, and those contained in my *present propositions*.

TO THE HONOURABLE THE COMMONS OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND IN PARLIAMENT ASSEMBLED.

The Petition of the Nobility, Gentry, and others of the County of Norfolk, in County Meeting assembled, this 3d day of January, 1823,

MOST HUMBLY SHOWETH.

That your petitioners have always been ready to make any sacrifices which were necessary to the defence of their country, and to the safety and dignity of their Sovereign's throne; but that they are now impelled by their well-known, indescribable, and unmerited sufferings, to approach your honourable House with an humble prayer, that you will be pleased to adopt the best means of relieving them from those sufferings.

That, in proceeding to suggest those means, which they do with the greatest respect and deference; your humble petitioners cannot disguise from themselves, and they will not disguise from your honourable House, that they entertain a fixed opinion, that this now unhappy country owes all its calamities to the predominance of certain particular families, who, since the passing of the Septennial Act, have by degrees appropriated to themselves a large part of the property and revenue of the whole nation, and who have, at last, by taxes, debts, and changes in the currency, involved themselves as well as the whole of this industrious community, in difficulties too great to be removed by the hand of Time, or by any but the most vigorous measures of legislation.

That, whether we look at the Church, the Army, the Courts of Law, the Customs, the Excise, the Colonies, or the Crown-Lands, we see in each a channel of enormous emoluments to these particular families, for whose benefit and aggrandisement, more than for anything else, the whole of these sources of riches would appear to exist. And that, therefore, though justice and necessity demand a reduction of the interest of the debt, and an equitable adjustment of all other contracts, your humble petitioners would deem such reduction an act of deep iniquity; and they deem such adjustment wholly impracticable as long as these particular families enjoy those emoluments, and as long as they retain in the legislature that absolute sway which they have acquired through the means of the Septennial Act, in conjunction with the notorious and scandalous abuses connected with the representation.

That it is well known to your honourable House, that, for more than twenty years, the particular families received a large part of the above-mentioned emoluments out of the money borrowed from the fundholders; that, during that period, more than a million of money was taken out of the loans to be given to the Church; and that, in fact, no inconsiderable part of the whole of the loans went into the pockets of these families; and, therefore, your petitioners will not suppose it possible for your honourable

House to harbour an intention to take even a single shilling from the fundholders, so long as these families shall continue to receive those emoluments.

Your petitioners, therefore, most humbly pray, that your honourable House will be pleased to pass an Act for causing an efficient Reform in the Commons' House of Parliament, in order that such Parliament may adopt the measures necessary to effect the following purposes:—

1. An appropriation of a part of the public property, commonly called Church Property, to the liquidation of the Debt.
2. A reduction of the Standing Army, including Staff, Barracks, and Colleges, to a scale of expense as low as that of the army before the last war.
3. A total abolition of all Sinecures, Pensions, Grants, and Emoluments, not merited by public services.
4. A sale of the numerous public estates, commonly called Crown Lands, and an application of the money towards the liquidation of the Debt.
5. An equitable adjustment with regard to the Public Debt, and also with regard to all debts and contracts between man and man.

But, while your humble petitioners are aware, that to reform the Commons' House and to effect the other purposes of justice and necessity, which they have here most respectfully pointed out, may require a lapse of months, they know, that your honourable House have the power, and they will not believe that you want the will, to afford them immediate protection against further ruin. They, therefore, seeing the present nature of their case; seeing the abject misery that hourly awaits them, pray that your honourable House will be pleased,

1. To suspend, by law, for one year, all distraints for rent, and to cause distraints to be set aside where they have been begun.
2. To suspend all process for tithes for the same period.
3. To suspend, for the same period, all processes arising out of mortgage, bond, annuity, or other contract affecting house or land.
4. To repeal the whole of the tax on Malt, Hops, Leather, Soap, and Candles.

These measures, so analogous to others, taken by your honourable House under circumstances far less imperious; these measures, so easily adopted; so free from the possibility of inflicting wrong; and at the same time so necessary to relieve your petitioners from the daily alarm in which they live; so necessary to afford them a hope of escaping from the pains and disgrace of the lowest pauperism and beggary: to believe that these measures, measures of bare protection from further wrong and ruin; to believe that these will be refused to your suffering petitioners, would be to suppose the

existence of that callousness of heart which your petitioners are far indeed from imputing to your honourable House.

Having thus, with the most profound respect, submitted to your honourable House those which they deem the best means for relieving their distresses, your humble petitioners, though they are satisfied that evils so unusual and of such uncommon magnitude require remedies of a nature extensive and extraordinary, beg leave to assure your honourable House, that they venerate the constitution of their fathers; that they seek for no change in the form of the Government; that they know how many ages of happiness and of glory their country enjoyed under a Government of King, Lords, and Commons; that they fervently hope that this constitution may descend to their children: but that they are fully convinced, that, unless the present evils be speedily arrested and effectually cured, a convulsion must come, in which the whole of this ancient and venerable fabric will be crumbled into dust. And your petitioners will ever pray.

The reader will see, that the present PROPOSITIONS go, in some respects, far beyond those contained in this petition. But then he will please to recollect, that not only have just nine years passed over our heads since 1823, when this petition was agreed to; but there have taken place, since that time, 1. The SMALL NOTE BILL (repealing Peel's Bill in its most essential part). 2. The PANIC in 1825. 3. The RE-ENACTMENT OF PEEL'S BILL IN 1826. 4. The CATHOLIC EMANCIPATION BILL. These measures have produced an augmentation, an accumulation of evil, that demands, in my opinion, the remedies which I now propose. However, I have, in the following Lectures, fully stated my reasons for this my opinion; and I am quite willing to abide by the decision of the nation and of time, with regard to the soundness or unsoundness of that opinion. All that I am here anxious about is, that it should be clearly understood, that my Lord RADNOR does not, by his letter to Mr. WHITTLE, stand by any means committed to these my MANCHESTER PROPOSITIONS: these express *my* opinions and *my* views. Chosen by a body of electors, pledged to support me to

proounded in those propositions ; which, with your permission, I will now read to you :—

1. To put an end to all pensions, sinecures, grants, allowances, half-pay, and all other emoluments now paid out of the taxes, except for such public services as, upon a very scrupulous examination, shall be found fully to merit them ; and to reduce all salaries to the American standard.
2. To discharge the standing army, except such part of the ordnance and artillery as may be necessary to maintain the arsenals at the sea-ports in a state of readiness for war ; and to abolish the military academies, and dispose of all barracks and other property now applied to military uses.
3. To make the counties, each according to its whole number of members of Parliament, maintain and equip a body of militia, horse as well as foot and artillery, at the county expense, and to have these bodies, as they are in America, mustered at stated periods ; so that at any time, a hundred thousand efficient men may be ready to come into the field, if the defence of the kingdom require it.
4. To abolish tithes of every description ; to leave to the clergy the churches, the church-yards, the parsonage houses, and the *ancient* glebes ; and, for the rest, leave them to the voluntary contributions of the people.
5. To take all the rest of the property, commonly called church-property ; all the houses, lands, manors, tolls, rents, and real property of every kind, now possessed by bishops, chapters, or other ecclesiastical bodies, and all the misapplied property of corporate bodies of every sort ; and also all the property called crown-lands, or crown-estates, including that of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster ; and sell them all, and apply the proceeds to the discharge of the Debt which the late parliaments contracted with the fund-holders.
6. To cease, during the first six months after June, 1832, to pay interest on a fourth part of the debt ; second six months, to cease to pay interest on another fourth ; and so on for the other two fourths ; so that no more

interest, or any part of the debt, would be paid after the end of two years.

7. To divide the proceeds of all the property mentioned in paragraph No. 5, and also in paragraph No. 2, in due proportion, on principles of equity, amongst the owners of what is called *stock*, or, in other words, the *fundholders*, or persons who lent their money to those who borrowed it in virtue of acts of the late parliaments, and to give to the fundholders, out of the taxes, nothing beyond these proceeds.
8. To make an equitable adjustment with respect to the pecuniary contracts between man and man, and thereby rectify, as far as practicable, the wrongs and ruin inflicted on thousands upon thousands of virtuous families by the arbitrary changes made by acts of the late parliaments, in the value of the money of the country.
9. To abolish *all internal taxes* (except on the land), whether direct or indirect, including stamp-taxes of every description ; and to impose such a postage-charge for letters as to defray the *real expenses* of an economical and yet efficient post-office establishment, and no more ; so that the postage would be merely a *payment* for the conveyance of letters, and not a *tax*.
10. To lay just as much custom-house duty on importations as shall be found conducive to the benefit of the navigation, commerce, and manufactures of the kingdom, viewed as a whole, and not to lay on one penny more.
11. To make effectual provision, in every department, for the maintenance of a powerful navy ; to give such pay and such an allotment of prize-money to the seaman as to render impressment wholly unnecessary ; to abolish the odious innovation of *naval academies*, and re-open the door of promotion to skill and valour, whether found in the heirs of nobles, or in the sons of the loom or of the plough ; to abolish all military *Orders*, and to place the navy next in honour to the throne itself.
12. To make a legal, a *fixed*, and a generous allowance to the King, and, through him, to all the branches and members of his family ; to leave to him the unshackled freedom of appointing all his servant-

whether of his household or of his public ministry ; to leave to him the full control over his palaces, gardens, and parks, as landowners have over their estates ; to take care that he be not worried with intrigues to purloin from him that which the people give him for his own enjoyment ; so that he may be, in all respects, what the Chief of a free people ought to be, his name held in the highest honour, and his person held sacred, as the great guardian of the people's rights.

13. To make an accurate valuation of all the houses, lands, mines, and other real property, in each county in the whole kingdom ; to impose a tax upon that property, to be paid quarterly, and in every county on the same day, and in such manner as to cost in the collection, or, rather, payment, not more than *four hundred pounds* a year in any one county ; to make the rate and amount of this tax vary with the wants of the state, always taking care to be amply provided with means in case of war, when war shall be demanded by the safety, the interest, or the honour of the kingdom.

14. To cause the **PROTESTANT HIERARCHY** to be legally repealed and abolished in Ireland ; and to cause the Parliament of the whole kingdom to hold its sessions, and the King to hold his Court in **IRELAND** once in every three years ; and to cause the same to take place in the city of **YORK** once in every three years, and also in the city of **SALISBURY**, once in every three years.

I am well aware, gentlemen, that, upon hearing these propositions read, many will be disposed to exclaim "What a visionary this man must be !" I am well aware of this : but, it is a great change which we want : something very great must be done ; and, as to the propositions being visionary, are they more visionary than the man would have been deemed, who, thirty or forty years ago, should have predicted many things of which we now behold the sad reality ? The fourteenth proposition will, I dare say, appear to many more visionary than all the rest ; but, let some one then, even that sensible Lord Althorp, who has recently been engaged in so dignified a correspondence with certain persons in this county, tell us **WHAT CAN BE DONE WITH IRELAND**,

which, you will please to observe, is far too great to be treated as if it were insignificant ; and with regard to which the Ministers know not what to do, any more than I should be able to obey an order to take this house and fling it into the air. However, my reasons for proposing these measures with respect to Ireland, I shall have hereafter fully to state.

As to the propositions being visionary, if any person had, thirty years ago, predicted that we should, in the year 1831, see a half-military police established in England ; dressed in uniform, and in numbers so great as to constitute a real army, formed into companies and battalions, put under leaders with military titles, marching rank and file : in short, if any one had told me, thirty years ago, that I should live to see a Bourbon *gendarmerie* established in London, with a *lieutenant de police*, together with all the rest of these things, for which, from my childhood, I had been taught to hold the Bourbons in contempt and abhorrence ; if any man had told me this in the year 1800, I should have deemed him a visionary indeed ; I should have turned from him as a person unworthy of attention. Yet, we have seen this horrid thing come to pass ; and we have seen a hundred English parishes burdened enormously for the maintenance of this army ; burdened much more than for the maintenance of the poor. If, only a very few years before the late war, some one had predicted that there would be established in England a standing army of 100,000 men ; nay, if some one had predicted during the last war, at the time when Pitt was promising us a peace that should give us indemnity for the past and security for the future, and calling upon us to make sacrifices of all sorts, in order to ensure the attainment of these objects ; if, at that time, some one had said, “ The peace will bring you neither indemnity nor security ; you will have to maintain a regular army of 100,000 men, besides 10,000 Bourbon *gendarmerie* ; you will have to maintain what they will call a dead weight, which shall surpass, in expense annually, the whole revenue of this happy kingdom at the time when his present Majesty was born ; you will find this, indeed, a very lively weight, though called a dead one, and find it singularly prolific ; though dead, it will breed exceedingly ; you will have to maintain the widows and the children of the men, and lest the burden should cease, at some time or other, the old men will be allowed to sell

"their half-pay to young men, which these young men
"may repeat when they become old, and thus the burden
"will remain stuck upon your children's children."

If, I say, any one had foretold this at the time when Pitt was promising indemnity for the past and security for the future, and was making this credulous nation believe that the monstrous sacrifices which it was making during the war would lead to a peace that would enable every man to sit under his own vine and his own fig tree, without any one to make him afraid : if at that time any one had told the nation that this standing army, this *gendarmerie* and this dead-weight, would be the result of the war, he would have been prosecuted as a stirrer-up of sedition, or pitied as a maniac. Yet we have seen these things, and see them yet ; we have found them to be no vision, but a cruel reality, under which we are writhing. If any one had at that time foretold that the peace establishment, military and naval, would cost the nation a great deal more annually than the annual cost of army and navy during the war with the revolted states of America, when England had not only to carry on a war against those states, but against France, Spain, and Holland, at the same time ; if any one had foretold this at that time, he would have been treated as a visionary ; yet such is the case, and the annual expense of army and navy, at the end of sixteen years of peace, exceeds that of any year of war against the revolted states of America, including the war against the three great countries before-mentioned ; a fact which, of itself, is more than sufficient to convince any sensible man that this system must be totally changed, before any one can hope to see real peace and prosperity in England.

If, forty-five years ago, any one had told Mr. ELMAN, a very celebrated farmer in Sussex, who gave evidence before a committee of the House of Commons in 1821, and who told that committee, that when he began business as a farmer, *every man in the parish* brewed his own beer, and drank it with his family by his own fire-side ; and that NOW (in 1821) not one single man in that parish did it, except a servant or two of his own to whom he gave the malt as a present. If any one had, at the time when Mr. Elman began business as a farmer, told him, that before his farming would be over, he would see the people of his parish become so miserable as hardly to know the taste of beer, and to be compelled to drink water and eat potatoes, he would

have turned from the prophet with disgust : visionary would have been an appellation much too mild to be applied to such a person, yet this horrid state of things has come to pass ; and this state of things we must change, or else Parliamentary Reform will be a mockery and a delusion.

One more instance, not going so far back. If, in the memorable year 1817, when the bankers and merchants of London, with their surprisingly wise Lord Mayor at their head, were assembled in what they call their Mansion-house, to address the King, and petition the Parliament, in approbation of the Power-of-Imprisonment Bills, and the Dungeon Bill, and the Gagging Bill, as being means absolutely necessary to put down those turbulent men, who, under pretence of seeking reform of Parliament, were, in fact, seeking to accomplish the treasonable design of overthrowing our happy constitution in church and state ; if, at that time, when a reformer could not move without a bayonet being presented at his breast, or a halter being shaken in his face ; if, at that time, the wise men of Gotham, being so assembled as aforesaid, to express their unshaken attachment to things as they were, and their resolution to use all the means in their power to put down and annihilate those seditious men who were crying for Parliamentary Reform ; if some one had stepped into the Mansion-house, and had just said, " My Lord Mayor, it will be better not to " issue these declarations ; for, in just fourteen years from " this day, these very bankers and merchants of London, " will meet in this very place, and will send forth addresses " to the King, in which they will bully the Lords for not " consenting to a Parliamentary Reform much more extensive " than that which would satisfy the present reformers ! "—" Turn him out ! "—" Knock him down ! "—" He's a par- " son ! "—Something of this sort would have taken place to a certainty ; the bankers and merchants of London, not being remarkable for their forbearance, when they possess power, and when their adversary is feeble. Yet, we have seen even this take place ; and, in that very Mansion-house, we have heard speeches against the Lords, and particularly against the Bishops, more inflammatory than any-where else.

Therefore, gentlemen, I am not to be deterred by the imputation of visionary as applied to me on account of those propositions, which I shall suffer still to be called visionary if any one choose so to call them, but I am perfectly satisfied that the measures which they describe must be adopted, or

that the reform which is talked of will be a contemptible delusion. A great many people mistake the Reform Bill for reform itself ; and a very great mistake it is. The Reform Bill furnishes the means of making the reform. A reform means a *change for the better* ; and, in this case, the change must be very great to be of any use at all. A great many people seem to imagine, or at least they act as if they imagined, that the mere sound of reform would be sufficient, without any proceedings to produce a change in the state of the country. The Ministers themselves appear to be amongst these persons ; for you never hear from their lips any-thing seeming to indicate that they look upon it as necessary that some great change should take place in the manner of managing the affairs of the country. Yet, if some great change do not take place, in this respect, I am perfectly convinced that the passing of the Reform Bill would lead to disappointment and discontent, such as must plunge the country into utter confusion. Does any one believe that the mere *sound* of the word *Reform* will quiet the country ? That, when the trader, who feels the work of ruin still proceeding, is told, in order to pacify him, not to complain *now*, for that we have *got reform* : does any one think, that that will make him submit to his ruin without further complaint ? When the hungry and angry half-starved labourers complain of their sufferings, and are ready to break out into acts of violence ; will they be quieted by telling them, that they must not complain *now*, for that we have *got reform* ; will they, at the sound of that word, cease to harbour vindictive thoughts relative to those whom they deem their oppressors ? Oh, no ! the reform must be something more than a *bill*, something more than a bit of printed paper ; it must, to be productive of harmony, cause something to be done to *better the state of the people* ; and, in order to do this, it must produce, and quickly too, not only a change in the management of the affairs of the country, but a *very great change*. When a man is brought by his extravagance to the verge of insolvency ; when having been puffed up by *Pitt's paper*, and pulled down by *Peel's bill*, he sees bankruptcy staring him in the face, it is not savings in the articles of salt and pepper that will rescue him from his embarrassments. Oh, no ! the turtle, the wine, the coach, the horses, the footmen and grooms and lady's maids must go, and even the *house*, the fine house itself, and the pianos and the music-masters, must all disappear. The word *economy* will not

keep such a man out of the Gazette. It must be real economy: there must be 20/- a year given for a house to live in instead of a thousand; otherwise the word economy is a delusion.

Such is our case now. If the *Reform Bill* be to leave the system of sway that which it now is; if the same sort of management of our affairs be to go on after that bill shall have passed as is going on now; and really, to judge from the language of the Ministers, one would say that *they contemplate no change*; if the *tithes* and *taxes* be still to remain such as they now are; if a Bourbon gendarmerie be still to dog our steps, and stop us when they like at any hour of the day and night; if the Englishmen, who do all the work, be still doomed to live on potatoes and water, while those who take from them the fruit of their labour, are living on all the choice products of the earth; if Englishmen and women be still harnessed and made to draw like beasts of burden; if a reformed Parliament cannot find the means of protecting the *dead bodies* of the working poor, while such ample means are found for protecting the *dead body* of a *hare*, a pheasant, or a partridge; then, indeed, the bishops did right in opposing the Reform Bill; for a greater delusion, a greater fraud, never was attempted to be practised on any part of mankind. Let me stop here, gentlemen, to request your particular attention to this matter relating to the want of law to protect the *dead-bodies* of the working-people. You all know, or at least every Englishman ought to know, that for an unqualified person to have *in his possession*, the body of a hare, pheasant, or partridge, was, a few months back, *a crime*, punishable by fine or imprisonment; that to have *in his possession* *wires*, or other implements, for taking any of these wild animals, is still *a crime*, punishable in the same manner; that, to be out in the night *in pursuit of*, and seeking after, the bodies of either of these wild animals, and carrying with him the implements wherewith to take or kill them, is still *a crime*, punishable with *transportation for seven years*, and this punishment may be inflicted, too, and has been, and is, frequently inflicted without the sanction of a *judge*, and at the sole discretion and pleasure of the justices in quarter-sessions, who, as you well know, are the game-preservers themselves. Yet those who could, and so recently too, pass over this last-mentioned law, and those new and "*liberal*" members who have been able to sit quietly, and say not a word about this law for transporting men for making free with the bodies of

wild animals, which, according to Blackstone, are the property of no man, and which belong in common to all men ; those who could make and so vigilantly enforce this law, cannot, for the lives and souls of them, find out the means of passing a law to protect the bodies, *alive* or *dead*, of the working-people ; other than that of making it lawful to *sell their bodies when dead*, to be cut up and cast away like the bodies of murderers or traitors.

Gentlemen, from every-thing that I have ever heard here in the North, and particularly in this town, I believe, that if the horrible bill to which I have just alluded had become a law, that law would have never been acted upon by the parochial authorities of Manchester. I hope that the same would generally have been the case ; but I have no scruple to say, that an attempt to enforce the law in any of the agricultural counties would have produced open and desperate rebellion. Judge you, gentlemen, of the feelings of the country people on this subject, when I tell you that there are *clubs* in the country parishes in Sussex, Kent, Surrey, Hampshire, and, I suppose, in all the southern counties, which clubs are for the purpose of forming a *fund* for defraying the expense of *watching the graves of the relations of the members of the club*, if any of them should die, or the graves of the *members themselves* if they should die ! How honourable to the feelings of the working people, and how disgraceful to the Parliament, is this fact ! Judge you, gentlemen, what would have been the consequences of an attempt to enforce amongst such a people the atrocious bill for selling their bodies to be cut up like those of the most heinous malefactors ! A labouring man, JAMES IVES, who worked constantly for me some time ago, came to me, with tears in his eyes, to get 12*s.* in advance of his wages, to pay (that being the price) for *watching the grave of his daughter*, who was just then about to be buried ! Why, gentlemen, what *government-protection* could this man discover ? What had this man to make him willing to be obedient to the laws ? Great care is taken of the *property of the rich* ; the law hunts it with inflexible eagerness go whither it may ; here the law has grown harder and harder, till it has made the receiving of stolen *goods* a *felonious* offence, punishable with *transportation*. But those who passed and have enforced so rigidly this law, have not been able to find out any means whatever to punish the RECEIVERS OF STOLEN BODIES ; though they **MUST** of necessity KNOW them to have been stolen,

if not murdered as well as stolen! Common justice, even natural justice, would make it *felony*, punishable with death, in any one to have in his *possession* a dead body, or a part of a dead body, unless able to produce proof that he obtained it in consequence of a *sentence of a court of justice*, or in virtue of the *last will* of the party.

This is what the people have a right to demand from the Parliament. For the want of it, even the horrid murders, recently come to light in London, are manifestly to be ascribed; and, if the working-people find no better protection from a reformed Parliament; if such Parliament still show that it values the dead body of a hare above that of the dead body of the working man, his wife, or his child; if this be the case, far better would it have been never to have brought in the bill. If Irishmen be still to be treated as they have been; if they, whenever the Government pleases, be to be shut up in their houses from sun-set to sun-rise, on pain of *transportation for seven years* if absent for more than *fifteen minutes*; and if that punishment be still to be inflicted without *judge or jury*, at the sole discretion of two justices of the peace and a barrister, all appointed by, and removable at, the pleasure of Government; if these things be to remain; and if the *bloody tithe battles* be still to disfigure Ireland and fill the world with wonder and with horror; if, in short, the reform of Parliament be still to provide heaps of luxuries for the idle tens of thousands, and to leave the labouring millions in misery, then *we want no reform*; then to talk of reform is to insult the suffering people.

But, gentlemen, if *we do want a reform*, we want a real one, and not a pretended one. We want a *great change for the better*; not merely a change, but a *great change*. The propositions which I have been permitted to read to you, have been said to aim at the destruction of the *institutions of the country*. I shall, in the future proposed lectures, prove clearly that they aim not only not at the destruction, but not at the impairing, of any one institution of the country, properly so called, unless to take money away from the industrious and to give it to the idle be "*an institution of the country*." We want no change in the form of the government; we want, indeed, to make this same government *a great deal cheaper* than it is; and, by so doing, we take the only sure course of preserving it; for it is utterly impossible that the millions can love it, while it is so very costly as it now is. We have, or at least I have, no quarrel with the

form of government. I know that our country has been the greatest, the most renowned, and the happiest in the world, under this form of government; I know that all its famous institutions have risen up, and that it was the cradle of real liberty, while there were a king, lords, and commons. I know that it is not republican government alone that can be *cheap* government; for I know that England knew nothing of an internal tax for century after century, while it still had this same kingly government; to which [*I might* have added] that the first time that it was cursed with an excise-tax, was during the short period that it was called a republic. I therefore wish to see no change in the form of the government; and while I express a wish to see it made a cheap government, and express my determination to have nothing to do with its affairs unless I see a fair prospect to give effect to that wish, I am clearly of opinion, and indeed I know the fact, that it can be rendered, without injustice to anybody, even a cheaper government than that of the United States of America. But, to arrive at this end, I can see nothing short of the adoption, the hearty and cheerful adoption, of the fourteen propositions which you have had the indulgence to permit me to lay before you.

I am sorry to say that I do not discover in any of the acts of the present Ministers, any disposition, or even any thought, to make that great change of which I have been speaking. I say not this in hostility to them. I have not the smallest desire to see them removed from their places, or to see them fall into discredit with the nation. If I could have my wish, my **LORD GREY** would remain in office until he had accomplished all the good which would arise from the adoption of these propositions. Nothing would please me better than to see this take place. But at the same time, it is my duty to state to you, that I have not been able to discover, either in the words or the acts of his lordship, any thing that encourages me to hope that he has any intentions at all of making so great a change as that which I hold to be absolutely necessary.

He who undertakes the great task which is now imposed upon the man who would set the affairs of this great kingdom to rights, must be prepared for exertions such as scarcely ever before were imposed upon any man. The thing, to be done well, and to make this reform really satisfactory to the nation, must be set about in right earnest; must be begun, as men begin to plough a field, or to weave a piece of cloth,

and be pursued on from the beginning to the end, without relaxation, and with a resolution to finish the work in the manner in which it has been begun. What, then, is the sort of men, to whom the people, who will now enjoy the right of voting, and especially in those great hives in the north ; what is the sort of men whom they ought to choose to encounter this arduous undertaking ? First, they should be stored with a great and perfect knowledge relative to the whole of the affairs of the nation. Next, they should possess the talent sufficient to enable them to state with clearness, and to argue conclusively, and to the producing of conviction, the matters, which they have the disposition to impress upon the minds of others. Next, they should possess resolution to speak what they think, in spite of every effort to damp or overawe them. Possessing all these endowments, however, still there would be wanting that prime quality of all, steadiness of purpose, and indefatigable industry, without which not all the virtues, and all the genius in the world, could do any-thing effectual, in the renovating a country, corroded with abuses of all sorts, embarrassed and entangled as the affairs of this country, and the country itself, now are. Even endowed with all these qualities, with perfect disinterestedness, with zeal, with devotion to country, all into the bargain, there would still be wanting a mind, not to be made to swerve from its point for one single moment by the blandishments of a court, or the still more dangerous blandishments of the aristocracy. Whether I have been drawing my own picture, and thereby saying indirectly that I am the man to be chosen for this great town of Manchester, whose bounden duty it is to set an example to all the other towns in the North ; whether I have been doing this or not, I must leave for you yourselves to decide ; but, lest you should come to a conclusion in the affirmative, it is necessary that I should now address myself to you more particularly upon the personal interest that I take in this affair as connected with the town of Manchester. Gentlemen, if I were capable of affectation, I could not carry it to the point of saying, that it is a matter of indifference with me, whether I be chosen to serve in Parliament or not, by this great town. I should, indeed, be an insensible clod, did no desire exist in my mind to have the great glory of being the representative of that town, the name of which is, throughout the whole world, synonymous with excellence in ingenuity and industry. But, justice to myself calls upon me to say, that I am not here for the low purpose of CANVASSING for a seat in Parlia-

ment. It has, for years, been my resolution, never to ask a man for his vote upon any occasion, a resolution from which nothing shall ever make me depart.

My sentiments with regard to this matter have been put in print, and the promulgation of them in that manner did not take place until I thought it was necessary to the public good, and until, indeed, it was called for by the circumstances which I am now about to state. The PROPOSITIONS which I have read to you had been published some time before that discussion in the House of Lords on the late Reform Bill, which ended in the rejection of that bill. During that discussion four of the Lords, FALMOUTH, WYNFORD (old Serjeant Best), CARMARVON, and LYNDHURST, alluded to the propositions, expressing, at the same time, their great alarm lest the ten-pound suffrage, as it stood in that bill, should lead to so disastrous an occurrence as that of putting me into Parliament. The great alarm of their Lordships made them less delicate and reserved upon this occasion than upon former occasions, it having, for a great many years, been their practice, in speaking of opinions or of matters connected with me, to content themselves with distant allusion, abstaining with all possible dignity from mentioning the *name*. Now, however, this reserve was thrown aside : Cobbett and Manchester were too much for dignity to endure in silence ; and out came the names tumbling together. With regard to FALMOUTH and WYNFORD, my dignity would certainly have prevented me from bestowing a moment's thought on what they said ; and with regard to CARMARVON, he being a HERBERT could, I well knew, from my long familiarity with the name, *have but one single point in view* ; a HERBERT always sticking to that point, as a needle to the pole. But my Lord LYNDHURST was another sort of man : to what he said I paid great attention, having great respect as well for his talents as for his character, and always remembering his wise and good conduct while he was ATTORNEY-GENERAL. But nothing said by Lord LYNDHURST tended to convince any impartial man that Mr. COBBETT ought not to be elected for Manchester, while it had a very strong tendency the contrary way.

However, " COBBETT and MANCHESTER " having been made one of the great arguments against the Reform Bill, it became me to be more explicit than I had theretofore been, with regard to my own desires and my own views relative to a seat in the reformed Parliament. Therefore, in a published letter, addressed to my Lord Grey soon after the rejection of

the Reform Bill, I, in the frankest manner, and with the most perfect sincerity, fully stated to his Lordship, and through him to the nation in general, and to the people of this great town in particular, those desires and those views.

And, gentlemen, as this paper was written after the maturest deliberation ; and as it is my determination to abide by every sentence contained in it, I will, with your permission; now take the liberty of reading it to you, begging you to be pleased to consider it as addressed to yourselves, and to receive it as tendered to you with the greatest respect.

" But, my Lord, the peers who oppose the bill seem to " have thought of *nothing but the present moment*. They saw; " as I saw, that the members coming from the great towns; " and chosen by the working-people, would never suffer that " working-people to be borne down to the earth as they " now are ; and they clearly saw that there was no possible " way of relieving the working-people, other than that of " taking off the taxes to a very great extent ; and they knew " that this could not be done without beginning by taking " from them and their families and dependents the enormous " sums which they now receive out of those taxes. They " saw, for instance, that the ten-pound suffrage would, if " I chose it, put me into Parliament, where they well know " that I never would be, without making the most strenuous " efforts to cause this object to be accomplished. I am fully " warranted in believing that the certainty, or nearly the cer- " tainty, that the ten-pound suffrage would put me into Par- " liament, was one of the reasons for their rejecting the bill. " I am fully warranted in believing this, because, while " almost every one of them who spoke against the bill made " allusion to me and to Manchester, no less than four of them " named me and that town, and cited the intention of that " town to choose me, as an instance of the great danger to be " apprehended from the ten-pound suffrage in great towns ; " and, my Lord, I would not take my oath that it was not " Cobbett and Manchester that convinced your colleague Lord " BROUGHAM, of the propriety of being ' ready to re-consider ' " his opinions relative to that part of the bill !

" To be plain, I do verily believe, that *Cobbett and Man-* " *chester* had great weight in the rejection of the bill, and " also great weight with most of your colleagues, if not with " your Lordship, in forming that design, which I believe " to have been entertained, if it be not still entertained, to " alter the bill in this respect, and to raise the suffrage;

“ and thereby diminish the number of voters in the great towns ; and I further believe, that this is the conviction of every well-informed man in the whole kingdom.

“ Such a thing as this never before disgraced any body of rulers upon the face of the earth ! What a surprising thing that a man, literally bred up at the plough tail ; never having been put to a school ; never having had a patron of any description ; having had to work all his life like a horse, to maintain and breed up a numerous family ; having had no one contingency that has favoured his progress in life ; having had no one earthly resource out of himself ; never having written a line to catch the thoughtless, or to flatter any description of persons, high or low ; having preferred living on a crust to riches and ease obtained by any of those means by which literary men usually obtain wealth and exaltation : what a surprising thing that such a man, leading such a life, should become so formidable to two great parties, dividing between them the whole of the powers of the government of the greatest and richest country in the world, as to make those two parties (waging eternal strife as to every-thing else) unite like children from the same mother, in efforts of every description, to keep that man down ! Yet, surprising as it is, it is not less true than it is surprising. Before the Reform Bill was brought in, and when we were all on the tiptoe of expectation, I said to a friend, who was sitting talking with me on the subject, ‘ What sort of reform do you think they mean to give us ? ’ His answer was, ‘ I think they will give just as much as will enable them to keep you out of Parliament.’ I told him that I made no doubt, that that would be *the wish* ; but that if they gave so little as that, they would soon become more odious than their predecessors ; and that they could not very well *exclude me by name*, as they had very nearly done in the SIX ACTS, two of which might as well have had *the name* ; for every man in the kingdom saw that the Acts were intended solely for *the man*.

“ What adds to the curiosity of the thing is, that I never have wished to possess any public power of any sort, except that of being in Parliament, and that wish arose from a desire to assist in effecting a Parliamentary Reform. I cannot but know the prodigious difficulties that must surround a man who shall now undertake to assist in putting the affairs of this great and troubled country

“ to rights. I know well that my *thirteen propositions*,
“ which Lord WYNFORD (I think they call him), who was
“ once the *renowned SERJEANT BES*T, lamented that he had
“ lost, and therefore could not read them to the House,
“ and which I will subjoin to this letter, that the late Ser-
“ jeant may have them another time; I know, my Lord,
“ that these thirteen propositions must be adopted to the
“ very letter, or that the discontent after the reform will be
“ even greater than it is at this moment. And am I, of all
“ men in the world, so stupid as not to perceive the great
“ difficulties attending that adoption? Am I so short-
“ sighted as not to foresee the turmoil which will arise in
“ consequence? Do I know so little of mankind as not to
“ be aware, that he who inflicts present evil on a comparative
“ few, is sure to find but weak apologists in the many, on
“ whom he is bestowing future and permanent good? Do I
“ not know, that reproaches follow the knife of the sur-
“ geon, though it be necessary to the saving of life? Can
“ I behold in prospect, as I do, as clearly as I behold the
“ paper on which I am writing, swarms of clamorous
“ pensioners, sinecure people, retired-allowance people, dis-
“ carded commissioners, dead-weight people, by thousands
“ upon thousands, growling fundholders, and dependents of
“ all these, swarming like locusts upon the banks of the Nile,
“ and all directing a good share, at least, of their reproaches
“ towards me: can I behold all this, and behold, at the
“ same time, the delivered, the freed, the benefited, the
“ happy nation, leaving me to bear the reproaches as well
“ as I can: can I behold all this, and, still possessing my
“ senses, embark in the perilous concern as on a party of
“ pleasure? Can I, who have lived all my life as free as a
“ bird in the woods; who have never been thwarted in my
“ will by any-body, and who have never had on my shoulders
“ responsibility to any living soul; who value not wealth;
“ who cannot gain a particle of fame; who despise the very
“ thought of possessing what are called honours and digni-
“ ties, and who would not pass one evening amongst the
“ guttlers and gossips and spitters and belchers of the
“ boozing-ken of Bellamy, even on condition of thereby
“ adding five years to the length of my life; can I, for
“ my own sake, sigh after a seat in the Parliament?

“ Yet, what a fuss, what a contriving, what a plotting, to
“ keep me out of the hole of candle-light confusion, to sit in
“ which, more than one session by candle-light, would de-

“ mand a motive much stronger than I can at this moment
“ conceive ! What an intriguing, what a plotting, what a
“ prosecuting, by both the parties ; and what terrible calamities,
“ to this our country ! And, at once horrible and
“ ludicrous as is the thought, I verily believe that, at last,
“ both parties would *prefer a going upon the rocks* to the seeing
“ of me in that Parliament, in which I do not want to be,
“ but to go into which I will *never decline*, if any body of
“ electors shall freely, and of their own accord, choose me to
“ be the representative of their will ; and in which Parliament
“ the nobility, if they had had common sense, would
“ have taken care to have me long and long ago, seeing
“ that, while I would not have suffered them to take one
“ penny unjustly out of the pockets of the people, I would
“ not have suffered them to be despoiled by loan-mongers
“ and Jews ; always having been convinced, as I still am,
“ that an aristocracy of *title and of privilege*, when kept
“ within due and constitutional bounds, brings none of that
“ oppression upon the working-people which is always
“ brought upon them by a *damned aristocracy of money*.

“ Now, my Lord Grey,” [the propositions were inserted just before this,] “ here, at any rate, there is nothing of an *abstract* nature ; nothing theoretic, nothing dark, nothing *covert*. This is what I would do, if I could have my will ; and if I were a member of Parliament, and found that this, the *whole* of this, could not be obtained by the Parliament, I would quit the concern as soon as I had ascertained this to be the fact ; as soon as I had ascertained that the people had chosen men not ready to do all this, or, at least, as soon as I had ascertained that the people would again choose such men. I would not consent to be the representative of any body of persons who would not pledge themselves most solemnly to support me in my endeavours to accomplish *all* this. And, further, I would accept of the post only on the condition that I should be at liberty to vacate it if I chose, at the end of one session, if the Parliament continued the shameful practice of sitting by *candle-light*, and under the same roof where there are an eating-house and a boozing-place. I will never sit, for any length of time, amongst ‘ legislators,’ who drop in one after another, or half a score at a time, belching, and picking their teeth. In such a scene, how can attention and reflection exist ? From such a scene sober thought is excluded by the laws of nature. From the fumes of part

“ and sherry and grog and brown stout and tobacco, from the
“ spattering of the frying-pan and the hissing of the gridiron,
“ wisdom flees as men flee from a pestilence. To account
“ for so great a country being brought to the state in which
“ this now is, after-ages will only want to be informed that
“ its legislators lounged away the morning in bed, and held
“ their deliberations in the night-time, under the same roof
“ with a guttling and guzzling house, and that, on an aver-
“ age, a fourth, or a third, of them were eating or drinking,
“ at the very moment that laws affecting the property, the
“ liberty, the life of millions were under discussion. This is
“ all that after-ages will want to know about the causes that
“ produced a state of things such as that which now exists
“ in England. To a body of men leading such lives and
“ addicted to such manners, no motive, not much more power-
“ ful than I can have an idea of, would induce me to belong
“ any longer than the time sufficient to enable me to
“ ascertain that no change in their manners was to be rea-
“ sonably expected. So that the renowned OLD SERJEANT
“ need not be very uneasy about the danger to be appre-
“ hended from my being in Parliament. Those who have the
“ power of choosing members of Parliament generally look
“ for a little coaxing ; and none will anybody ever get from
“ me. It will be service for me to bestow, and not a favour
“ for me to receive. I have, with the rest of the people, an
“ interest in the general happiness of the nation ; but I have
“ none but a common interest ; and there is no moral obliga-
“ tion on me to submit, for the sake of the general good, to
“ endure the breath of the belchers from Bellamy’s, who
“ have, I am told, even a ‘ *smoking room* ! ’ All this must
“ be changed, or there can be *no good* arise from reform. At
“ any rate, it *shall* be changed, or I will have nothing to
“ do with it for more than *one session*. So that, again I say,
“ OLD SERJEANT BEST may make himself pretty easy on *ac-
“ count of me.* ”

Such, gentlemen, were my sentiments upon this im-
portant subject, and such they remain. I repeat that it
would be great glory for me to be chosen a member for Man-
chester, but that that glory does not in my mind weigh as a
single feather, when compared with the weight which it
would give me in my endeavours to effect those objects which
are described in the propositions which I have read to you this
evening. Manchester includes, in its own name, in the
opinions of the rest of the kingdom, not only all the in-

dustrious part of Lancashire, but extends itself into parts of other counties. It is the centre of them all. The word Manchester means industry, English industry, ingenuity, and opulence. To have my name go over the world coupled with that of Manchester, would be great glory indeed; and so great that the best efforts of the remainder of my life, even if successful, would be no more than enough to merit such reward. But I most solemnly declare to you, gentlemen, that great as the honour would be, proud as I should be of it, great as would be the triumph that it would give me over more numerous and more malignant foes than man ever had before to encounter; it would not give me a thousandth part of the satisfaction which I should derive from the certainty that it would give me much greater weight than I could derive from being chosen for any other place in the kingdom. Westminster, with a vastly superior population, I consider a mere nothing compared to Manchester: it is a mass of drones and wasps got together, to swallow up the honey collected by the industrious bees: it is a heap of rabble, and of court sycophants: a swarm of loungers at clubs and gaming-houses, collected together, as it were, for the express purpose of devouring the fortunes of skilful and industrious masters, and the earnings of their work-people. The CITY OF LONDON is, in itself, what it always was, a place for the deposit of wealth, and for the reception and the circulating of goods; its inhabitants, indeed, pretty well corrupted by the crapulous crowds which the taxes have drawn together in its environs, and by the swarms of Jews that carry on their usurious traffic in its centre. The city of London, however, is a great commercial city, as it always was, and always will be; but the West-end of the town, as they call it, is at once the great corrupter of the nation, and the great devourer of the fruit of its toils. Millions upon millions of the hard earnings of the people have been drawn thither to be wasted on objects of mere show, and thrown away, scattered about with such profusion, and with such an abuse of all good taste, as to make it rational in me to believe that the squanderers have had no other object in view than that of wasting the substance of the people, and that of collecting together swarms of the most degraded, and, at the same time, most insolent and prostituted wretches that ever disgraced the human shape. Mr Edmund Grundy, who lives at Bury, in this county, and who, being in London, last spring, and having been to take a look at what is called the House

of Commons, saw, during the short time that he was present in the gallery, 60,000*l.* of the public money voted to widen and ornament some street in Westminster, at which he was greatly astonished, seeing that, in Lancashire, the towns themselves, by local taxes or collections, paid for works of this sort carried on within their precincts. Mr. Grundy and I, being compelled to work for that which we possess, had not leisure for the purpose, or I could have taken him, in the course of half an hour, and shown him how at least ten millions of the nation's money had been wasted in a similar manner. And will these industrious towns send to a reformed Parliament one single man who will not pledge himself most distinctly to put a stop to this prodigal waste of the people's earnings ? If one single man be sent from any of these towns without such pledge, the people of that town will deserve never again to behold days of prosperity.

Gentlemen, I have heard it said, that Manchester, being a commercial town, ought to choose none but *commercial men* as its representatives in Parliament. If the Parliament were intended for no other purpose than that of ascertaining what would be best for Manchester, relative to the importation of cotton and silk, and the exportation of cotton and silk goods, and what regulations would be best, relative to the use of machinery, of coals, and of engines ; if, in short, the Parliament were to be merely a chamber of commerce, then, men brought up and engaged in commerce all their lives might be the most proper to represent Manchester. But, as the prosperity, as the well-being, of this great town, is, and always must be, completely inseparable from those of the nation at large ; and as it requires, in order to determine that which is best for the whole, a thorough knowledge of all those relationships which bind the interests of one part of the kingdom to that of all the rest ; as laws will have to be passed, affecting every part of the people, from the lord in his mansion down to the labourer in his cottage, it does appear to me that there is very little weight to be given to the opinion which points out commercial men as being the only men fit to represent great commercial towns. As far as my observation has gone, experience by no means speaks in favour of this opinion. In the city of London I have the honour to be represented by four commercial men ; and I do not happen to know any four other members of Parliament, with whose services I think the city of London could more conveniently dispense. However, against one thing I beseech

the people of these towns to guard themselves, and that is the choosing of men of such amiable facility as to be easily seduced from their duty by blandishment. Many a man of perfect honesty, of perfectly good intentions, and of real public spirit into the bargain, has been rendered a mere tool in the hands of the Ministry, or of the other party, by appeals well made to his vanity. He means well, goes with a resolution to be firm, even anticipates the heartfelt applause of his constituents as the reward of his fidelity to his trust, gets clapped down at dinner between an earl and a duke ; or, if his virtue be of an extremely stubborn kind, by the side of a lord's daughter, or, if the wife be handsomer, by the side of the lady herself. In an instant the lights dance before him ; his brain swims ; he looks back to the town that has sent him, as a rich manufacturer looks back to the clogs which he wore when he was a boy ; away goes all his resolution ; and, though he become not an absolute rogue, he becomes of no more use to his constituents than if he were a man cut out of wood.

Once more, to speak of myself and of my views as to this matter, I repeat to you, Gentlemen, that, were I to consult my own private taste, my own private feelings and pleasure, I should decline serving in Parliament even for this famous town ; and I again most positively declare, that nothing shall induce me to sit for more than two sessions by candle-light, and that I will not pledge myself to sit by that light for more than one session. It is impossible that an assembly keeping such hours, even if consisting of wise and upright men, should produce good works. As a strong instance in confirmation of this opinion, suffer me to relate to you what took place in the AMERICAN CONGRESS (when I was last in America) in consequence of *candle-light legislation*. In 1817, the war had broken out between the Spanish Colonies in South America and the King of Spain and the United States had passed an act, which they called an act of *neutrality*. This act had just been promulgated when I (fleeing from the dungeons that Sidmouth and Castlereagh had prepared for the reformers) arrived in LONG ISLAND. Upon hearing the complaints, relative to this act, of some of the Spanish revolters, I read it, and found, that, instead of its being an act of *neutrality*, it was an act of great partiality against the Colonies, which I reprobated with great severity, especially as it came from a country who boasted of that *independence* which it had acquired, and so recently too,

by revolting against its own king. The paper, containing these just reproaches, was sent to be published, and was published, in the *Register*, in England ; but, at the same time, it was published in New York, because I would not say any-thing of the Americans that I did not say to their face. Now, observe, it had always been, and still was, the practice of the Congress to sit from nine o'clock in the morning to three in the afternoon. When the Congress met, in November, I having written about this act in the previous month of July, the very first subject that they took in hand was a revision of this *Act of Neutrality* ; and a bill was brought in by Mr. CLAY to alter and amend that act ; and this gentleman, in moving for leave to bring in the bill, said, that the House would be aware that the error had been pointed out by a celebrated Englishman then in the United States, who might with propriety, perhaps, have spoken of it in terms less harsh ; but that his censure of the act, however unnecessarily severe, forms no ground for not at once correcting the error, and thereby doing justice to the Spanish colonies. The bill was brought in and quickly passed ; but, Gentlemen, that which is worthy of your particular attention is this ; that Mr. CLAY stated, as an apology for the error, that the act was passed on the last day of the session, and, on account of the press of business, was passed *at ten o'clock at night* !

All the world knows, that the morning is the time for all matters of importance ; that the mind is then serene, if it ever be ; that it is then unclouded by heavy food and muddling drink ; that it is then, if ever, fit to be employed in the making of laws ; that is to say, in the performance of things affecting the happiness of millions. When a man undertakes a duty like this, those whom he represents are entitled to his *best hours*. The present hours were resorted to in order to accommodate lawyers, clerks in office, merchants, and bankers, who want the prime of the day for themselves and their own private affairs, and who give to their constituents only that part which they have to lounge away. All this must be changed, or the reform will bring no good to the nation ; and, as far as I am concerned, Gentlemen, *it shall be changed* : for I will never sit, at most, more than two sessions amongst men who debate by candle-light, and who have a guttling and a guzzling place under the same roof that covers the scene of their discussions. This is my firm determination. If I quit my pleasant course of life, it shall be for the purpose of accomplishing some *great good*

for my country. My career has been long, and always brilliant, and brilliant it shall be to the last. On the first of January, the day after the close of these lectures, I shall have published a *Register* every week for *thirty years*, with the exception of the six weeks that it took to carry me across the Atlantic (out of the reach of Sidmouth) and the six weeks that it took to bring the first *Register* from Long Island to England. I, last January, expressed my intention to *close* this publication at the end of 1832; being resolved, that my light shall never go out twinkling in the socket; being resolved, that the last number shall want no part of the spirit that marked the first. Judge you, then, Gentlemen, whether I be a man to set any, even the smallest, value on a *mere seat* in Parliament! Judge you, whether I be a man voluntarily, and with my eyes open, to sink quietly down into that insignificant thing called an "*honourable gentleman*," sitting beside the "*gallant officer*" or the "*worthy alderman*." Judge you, whether I be made of vulgar stuff like this! Oh, no! Gentlemen of Manchester, great though I should deem the glory of having my name associated and sent through the world, coupled with that of this renowned hive of industry, not even that would I accept of unaccompanied with the assurance of being able to perform some great and memorable good for my country, and especially for its laborious millions; and, as I can have no such assurance; as I can have no such hope, unless those who choose me be ready to pledge themselves to stand by and support me in my endeavours to effect the purposes that I have so fully and so frankly stated to you, on that pledge being given or withheld, will depend whether I shall have that great honour, which is the only thing that could be a compensation for the labours that the task would impose upon me.

LECTURE II.

27th December, 1831.

GENTLEMEN,

I am this evening, under your indulgence, to enter upon a defence of the fourteen propositions which I have put forth in print, and which those who live in idleness upon the

fruit of the toil of the people have not scrupled to declare to be utterly subversive of the institutions of the country. The first three of those propositions are as follows:—

1. To put an end to all pensions, sinecures, grants, allowances, half-pay, and all other emoluments now paid out of the taxes, except for such public services as, upon a very scrupulous examination, shall be found fully to merit them; and to reduce all salaries to the American standard.
2. To discharge the standing army, except such part of the ordnance and artillery as may be necessary to maintain the arsenals at the sea-ports in a state of readiness for war; and to abolish the military academies, and dispose of all barracks and other property now applied to military uses.
3. To make the counties, each according to its whole number of members of Parliament, maintain and equip a body of militia, horse as well as foot and artillery, at the county expense, and to have these bodies, as they are in America, mustered at stated periods; so that at any time, a hundred thousand efficient men may be ready to come into the field, if the defence of the kingdom require it.

Now, gentlemen, is there anything here destructive of the institutions of the country? This phrase, "*institutions of the country*," has become very fashionable, ever since a reform of the Parliament has been proposed by the Ministers. In the absence of all argument, in the absence of everything amounting to a rational objection against the Reform Bill, the general and sweeping charge of its tending to destroy the institutions of the country, has been in the mouth of every one, from the highest to the lowest, who saw, in the natural operation of that bill, the sure termination of that base corruption which has so long disgraced, and that system of plunder which has so long been beggaring, this country, which was once the foremost in the world for honour and for happiness.

Well, now, before we go further, before we enter on a consideration of the propositions which you have permitted me to read to you, let us, since these enemies of the Reform Bill will not do it, *name* the institutions of the country; let us say what they are; and then we shall be better able to

judge whether these propositions of mine have any tendency to destroy these institutions. It will hardly be pretended that the power of justices of the peace to transport men for seven years for being in pursuit of their hares and pheasants, is an *institution* of the country. It will hardly be pretended that half-pay, military and naval, given to rectors and vicars and deans and prebends and bishops of the Church of England, is an institution of the country. It will not, surely, be pretended that tacitly sanctioning the receiving of dead bodies, whether stolen from the grave or murdered, and cutting them up, in order that men may acquire the knowledge necessary to ease the pains of the rich; it will hardly be pretended that this is an institution of the country. It can scarcely be an institution of the country to harness poor men and women, and make them draw carts and wagons, only because they are poor! But, let us see what the institutions of the country are. I have endeavoured to ascertain what they are; and I find them to be sixteen in number, and to be as follows:—

1. The common law of England.
2. An hereditary king, having well-known powers and prerogatives.
3. An hereditary peerage, with certain titles and privileges, and certain legislative and judicial powers.
4. A House of Commons chosen by the people, and in the choosing of whom, the peers are forbidden to interfere.
5. A Court of Chancery, having a chancellor at the head of it, appointed by the King.
6. Three courts of law, the judges of which are appointed by the King.
7. Juries to try causes and accusations, under the advice and assistance of the judges.
8. Courts of quarter and petty sessions of justices of the peace.
9. Mayors and other magistrates, to administer justice in cities and towns.
10. Sheriffs to impanel jurors, and to execute the writs and other legal commands of the judges and justices.
11. Coroners to examine into sudden, accidental, and strange deaths of any of the people.
12. Constables to obey the judges and justices in the performance of acts necessary to the keeping of the peace and the execution of justice.
13. Manorial lordships, having, in most cases, the power

of appointing constables, and other petty officers, for keeping the peace.

14. Jails for the purpose of enabling the sheriff to keep safe the criminals committed to his charge.

15. Parish stocks for the punishment of petty offenders.

16. A church established by statute law, having a ritual also established by statute law.

Now, these are the institutions of the country; they are the settled, permanent means of governing the country, of managing its affairs, of causing the laws to be obeyed, of preserving its peace, and providing for its honour and for its happiness; and, instead of tending to the overthrow of any of these institutions, my propositions must necessarily tend to the preserving of them, or, rather restoring them to their ancient purity, and causing them to produce effects such as they used to produce.

But though I do not aim at the destruction, or at the impairing, of any one of these institutions, I do aim at the destruction of those things which have caused the far greater part of these institutions to be greatly impaired, and, in many instances, to become merely a screen for the hiding of oppression. I know of hardly one of these institutions which has not lost its due effect, which has not been adulterated or corrupted. In looking over the list of them I hardly perceive one which is what it was, and what it still ought to be. The office of the King has been shorn of a great many things that made it beneficial to the country; the House of Peers has been so multiplied, and so managed, by one party after another, as to make it that which it formerly was not; as to the House of Commons, the people have just called upon it to pass sentence upon itself. The Court of Chancery is quite another thing than it was in the time of Sir Thomas Moore and Bishop Gardiner, when the latter had a retinue more splendid at the opening of his seals than appertained to any sovereign prince in Europe; of judges, juries, justices of the peace, and coroners, I shall speak by-and-by. After looking over the list with the greatest care, and comparing the present practice with the original institutions, and with the practice of ages, I really can perceive no one of these institutions of the country that has not been wholly changed, if not totally annihilated, save and except the fifteenth institution; namely, the parish stocks, which seems to be kept up in all its pristine purity: for, there, in every parish, are still the two oak-planks which,

when shut down together, have two circular holes going through them, to receive the legs of the patient: there is still the post and all, just as the thing was a thousand years ago; and this, because, at common law, every parish is indictable that does not keep its stocks in perfect repair; and because country attorneys have a great taste for the little pickings which arise out of indictments preferred against parishes. But though the institution still remains unaltered in its geometrical dimensions, the use of it has been wholly laid aside; and the solitary dungeon and the treadmill, two perfectly new inventions; these harsh things have come to supply the place of this old and gentle and good-humoured mode of chastisement.

But, gentlemen, there are some of these institutions of the country, which have undergone a change of a very important nature, and which must be changed back again before England will again be worthy of its ancient name. Of all the institutions of the country, none are of so much importance to the people as the institution of *judges, jurors, and coroners*. The judges of England have been, and very justly, its greatest boast, from the days of Alfred to the present time; for though we sometimes see what we do not like to see pass upon the bench, taking the whole together, it is pretty nearly all that we have left, the person of the King excepted, which has not, more or less, been stripped of the veneration that belonged to it; but though the judges themselves are, I love to believe, everything that they ought to be, they have been stripped of their power of protecting the people, in those cases where their power was the most necessary. This stripping has not taken place by a direct and positive abridgment of their power, but by giving to justices of the peace most important power, which ought to have remained exclusively with the judges. You know, gentlemen, as well as I, that our boast has been that the judges were appointed by the King; and that by that appointment, being *for life*, unless put an end to by impeachment, or a joint address of the two Houses of Parliament, the King rendered the judges independent even of himself. This was our great security for the impartial administration of the law. All foreigners writing on our form and mode of government, have eulogised this part of our institutions, which has always been our great boast. The ground of the eulogy was this; that no person, that no Englishman could be made to suffer any serious punishment, whether pecuniary or bodily, except convicted by a jury of the vicinage, under

the advice and expoundings of a judge, holding his office for life, independent even of the King ; and this was not only the theory, but it was the practice in our country for ages. But how stands the matter now ? By statute after statute ; line upon line ; here a little and there a little, we at last find the justices of the peace, who are all chosen by the minister of the day ; who are appointed to, and who are turned out, of their office at the pleasure of the minister without cause assigned ; we find these men, and perhaps more than half of them parsons, pensioners, placemen, officers of the army, or officers of the navy, whose preferment and promotion, and whose very bread, in many cases, depend upon the breath of the minister ; we find these men empowered to try misdemeanors ; to try felonies of a heinous character ; we find these men empowered to imprison for any length of time, and to transport men and women even for life ! And we have recently seen KNATCHBULL and his brethren on the bench of KENT, sentence a man to FIVE YEARS' IMPRISONMENT for agricultural rioting, and the magistrates of Surrey sentence a libeller to be imprisoned for two years in Horsemonger-lane jail amongst felons. We have seen a man, whom the presiding magistrate in Middlesex had sentenced to transportation for seven years, having uttered some insolent words to the chairman, called back again, and sentenced to transportation for life ! Thus, then, I think, that there is not much fear that the adoption of my propositions would do much injury to this institution of the country.

Of more importance still is the institution of *juries*. And how stands this matter ? If there be anything truly and exclusively *English*, it is the institution of *juries*. MAGNA CHARTA says that no man shall suffer in life, limb, person, or property ; that no punishment shall be inflicted on his body, and that no money or goods shall be taken from him, except by the assent of a jury of the vicinage. Give me time, and I could point out, at the very least, five hundred instances, in which men are now liable to be fined, and frequently are fined, and sometimes to their utter ruin and the ruin of their families, without the intervention of a jury, and at the sole will and pleasure of justices or commissioners appointed and removeable at the pleasure of the ministers of the day. In an equal number of instances, the people's bodies are liable to be imprisoned, or otherwise punished, by the same authorities, and without the intervention of a jury ; but in unhappy and ill-treated Ireland, though now united with

England, though the English common law be applicable to Ireland as well as to England, we see that men and women may be, whenever the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland shall choose so to determine, even *transported without trial by jury*. Aye, and at the sole pleasure of two justices of peace, and of a barrister in the pay of the Government, and this for the heinous offence of being absent from their dwellings for the space of fifteen minutes at a time, between sunset and sunrise.

Whoever looks into the ancient and admirable laws of England, will see with what tenderness those laws watched over the *lives of the people*. The institution of CORONER, still unknown to every country but England and the United States, was, of itself, enough to immortalize the nation by which it was first adopted. So important was this institution deemed by our forefathers, that the regulations concerning it form no small part of their code. So careful was the law of the lives of the people; so imperative did it make the duty of every one to take care not to expose those lives to danger; that mills, wagons, wells, chalk-pits, bitten and goring animals, in some cases, became forfeited in consequence of injury done by them to the life of any person, poor as well as rich; and the institution of coroner, and the practice arising out of that institution, precluded almost the possibility of any man, woman, or child, coming by their death in any violent manner, or from any accident, without the true cause of the death being ascertained, and without punishment falling upon the guilty causer of the death, if guilt there were; or punishment of an inferior degree, if arising from fault or negligence. What do we behold now then? We have certain information that innumerable human bodies are taken possession of and cut to pieces, without any inquest on the part of a coroner. It has come to light that many of these bodies have been obtained by wilful murder, and yet we see the Parliament meet, after this horrible discovery has been made, and we hear no one come forward with a proposition to cause even inquiry to be made into the subject; and we hear of no one proposing a law to cause the office of the coroner to be applied, in order to put an end to these horrible practices.

Even the office of constable has been superseded; the power of the parishes, in many instances, has been taken away; their legitimate and ancient power of appointing their own constables. In the case of the justices, especially for

the four counties of Middlesex, Kent, Surrey, and Essex, the Government has been allowed to give the justices salaries ; and these justices in these four counties form a majority on the bench. In the same counties the office of constable has been superseded by a half-military establishment called a "*police*," in imitation of the Bourbon government of France. This police is appointed by the Government and not by the parishes ; and, therefore, even the institution of constable is gone.

After this review, let no one accuse me of contemplating the destruction of the "*institutions of the country*." It will clearly appear, on the contrary, that my propositions, if adopted, must tend to produce a restoration of the institutions of the country. And now, gentlemen, under that indulgence, of which I have already experienced so much, I will proceed to lay before you the reasons which occur to me, in support of these propositions, beginning with that which relates to pensions, sinecures, grants, retired allowances, and salaries.

I make an exception in all cases, except the sinecures and the salaries, in favour of those sums that shall be found to be fully merited by public services. With regard to the pensions and other emoluments, which are clearly unmerited by any such services, there being no other justification or excuse, my Lord ALTHORP, who has recently made so brilliant a figure in a correspondence with Mr. Hulton, of Hulton, said frankly that, in most instances, they must be deemed "*works of charity*." And, as charity covereth a multitude of sins, Mr. Hulton might have been a little sparing of his lordship. But charity used to mean quite a different thing than this. St. Paul recommends charity very strongly ; and the old-fashioned religion of our fathers, which held charity to be the first of the catholic virtues, explained it to mean feeding the *hungry*, clothing the *naked*, harbouring the *houseless*, and comforting the *broken-hearted*. The persons included in this proposition of mine answer to none of these descriptions. They are not hungry, naked, houseless, nor are they bowed down in spirit, but very much the contrary ; for, they are amongst the most arrogant, haughty, and insolent wretches on the face of the earth. But there was, according to the definition of St. Paul, explained and enforced by the ancient fathers of the church, and by all the great civilians, one very essential circumstance in constituting charity, which is wanting here. Charity, according to all

these high authorities, meant the bestowing of something which was the property of him who bestowed it; and generally it meant the giving to another something of your own, which really might, if kept by you, be useful to yourself. Never before, in this world, did we hear it deemed an act of charity to make a gift of other people's goods. A distressed object going to a grocer, nothing so easy as for the charitable grocer to go into the shop of his neighbour the baker, and relieve the poor object with a loaf, without giving the baker anything for it, which, however, instead of being an act of charity, the law would call an act of theft or robbery. What term we ought to apply to those who take the people's money, and give it to persons selected by themselves, and principally amongst their own order, I leave you, gentlemen, to determine.

St. Paul exhorts, and not by dry precept, but by example, those to whom he addressed his epistles, *to work with their own hands*, and to live sparingly at the same time, that they might have to give to those who needed; but this is a species of charity of which those who have the fingering of our money do not seem to have any very distinct idea. Upon this list of pensioners, this long list of objects of charity, we find lords, dukes, marquises, earls, viscounts, duchesses, and countesses, and so forth, and whole families of children, beginning generally with the mother, and going down to the baby in arms. Amongst these we find a whole family of the name of HAY, one of the females of which was, at any rate, about twenty-two years upon the pension list, and who, at the end of that time, became the "*lady*" of the present Sir JOHN CAM HOBHOUSE. Whether she has the pension yet is more than I can say. Some of these pensions are granted for life; some of them during the pleasure of the King, that is to say, his ministers; some of them for a term of years; there being in all this concern a variety so great and so enchanting, as to make it the work of a man's life to come at anything like a clear statement of the manner in which the money is taken away from us. But, in order to have a fair view of the extent to which the principles of justice are adhered to, let us look at the manner in which the settled laws of the country operate upon the middle and lower classes, when any of their families, any of their children, any of their parents, stand in need of parochial relief. The celebrated act of Elizabeth, which first made parochial provision for the relief of the poor, and of

the cause of which act I shall have to speak to-morrow evening, when I come to speak of the property of the church ; that celebrated act, while it imposed a compulsory assessment for the relief of the poor and indigent, compelled the father or mother, *if of substance sufficient*, to give, out of their own substance, relief to their indigent children, grandchildren, and even great-grandchildren ; and also compelled children, *if of sufficient substance*, to give, under similar circumstances, relief to their fathers and mothers, and, if necessary, their grandfathers and grandmothers. Nothing could be more just than this provision of the law ; such is the law still ; a law bottomed upon the maxim of St. Paul, that he who abandons his own kindred to want, is worse than a heathen. But if this law be just, why is it not applied to the families of the nobility and the clergy and the gentry, as well as to the middle and working classes who toil for their bread ? A few years ago, a man in the parish of TICEHURST, in the county of Sussex, applied to me for advice, under the following circumstances : The man was nearly or quite four-score years of age ; he had been a hard-working man all his life-time ; had reared a great family without any assistance from the parish ; had from his long and sedulous savings, become the proprietor of two tenements, worth 15*l.* a year, upon the rent of which, togetherwith what he was still able to do in the way of work, he kept himself from the parish, and hoped so to do, till the end of his life. One of his sons had died, and left three children, who were all old enough to be able to work for the farmers. They did work for them ; but, as the farmers paid part of their wages out of the poor-rates, they deemed the poor children to be *paupers*, according to the present debasing and infamous phraseology, the word pauper never having been used in the act of Queen Elizabeth. The children being thus placed upon the poor-book, the parish officers applied to the magistrates to make the grandfather pay to the parish that part of the wages which the children received out of the poor-rates. The magistrates made the order accordingly. The old man answered that, if he did this, he must go to the workhouse himself. The reply was, that HE MIGHT SELL THE TENEMENTS ; and that if he would not do that, the parish officers should do it for him. Precisely how the thing terminated I do not now recollect, but I think it ended by a seizure of the tenements on the part of the parish officers, and I dare say

that the dismal drama closed by the old man's expiring in that poor-house, from which, by constant industry and care, he had kept himself and his family for so many years.

Here, then, is an illustration of my Lord Althorp's English charity. Lady Juliana Hobhouse was doubtless the child or grandchild of somebody that had something more than two tenements worth 15*l.* a year; and, observe, my lady Juliana was not set to work as the poor children at Ticehurst were; they, poor things, were working in the fields, where it was right for them to be at work; while she was living like a lady, partly upon the fruit of the labour of these very children. Not another word need be said upon this part of the subject; for, if you, gentlemen, who will now have the power of choosing members of Parliament, do not choose men who will pledge themselves to do away with this injustice; if, under the influence of any motive whatever, you neglect the performance of this great duty, this so-much-desired Reform Bill will be of no benefit to the country, and you will deserve to suffer, all your lives, that pressing want of which many of you now so justly complain.

With regard to the sinecures, we have a very happy illustration in the history of that of the auditor of the Exchequer, the present Lord GRENVILLE, who, from this office, has received 4,000*l.* a year during about fifty years; and, of course, he has received from us, in this shape, besides others, about 200,000*l.* of principal money. A sinecure means a place which gives a man *nothing to do*. In this case, however, it was the duty of the auditor, just to *sign* the exchequer bills issued by the treasury. This, however, Lord GRENVILLE did not do; but left them to be signed by a clerk. One HASLETT, who was in some office in the Bank, stole a great parcel of these exchequer bills, and disposed of them for his own purposes. He was tried for the offence, convicted; and, as every one thought, was surely to be hanged by the neck till he was dead; but a motion was made for arrest of judgment, upon the ground that these were a parcel of good-for-nothing papers, *not having been signed by the auditor of the exchequer himself*, a doctrine which was confirmed by the decision of the twelve judges! And, thereupon, Haslett was not hanged for stealing the *exchequer bills*, but transported for stealing bits of paper! Well, but Lord GRENVILLE signed the exchequer bills for

the future to be sure? Not he; but the *Parliament* passed an *act* to authorise his clerk to sign them; and to make it a capital felony to steal them in future, though signed only by the clerk! An auditor means an examiner of accounts; and the business of this auditor professes to be to look into, and pass, the accounts of the treasury. By-and-by Lord *GRENVILLE* became *First Lord of the Treasury* himself; and it did seem too monstrous for a man to be auditor of his own accounts. The poet speaks of "soldering close impossibilities, and making them kiss;" but even his imagination never reached the reality of that which was now beheld. Lord *GRENVILLE* did not like to part with the 4,000*l.* a year; yet how was he to keep it? for, it was against law, as well as against reason, that a man should be auditor and treasurer at one and the same time; at last the difficulty was got over by the old remedy, a resort to the parish pump; and out came an *Act of Parliament*, brought into the *House of Commons* by Charles Fox himself, to make it lawful for Lord *GRENVILLE* to be *First Lord of the Treasury* and auditor of the accounts at the same time.

This is a sample of the whole sack. It would be tedious, gentlemen, to go over the whole list, which, adding the suitable description in each instance, and printing very closely, would make a book bigger than that which contains the *New Testament*. These sinecures are only another name for the same thing; another channel through which those who have had the power over our purses have taken our money, and used it for themselves. There is enough, then, on the subject of pensions, sinecures, and grants, of which latter there is a pretty great number, and each of them of thumping amount, and founded in justice just as much as the two former items. We now come to what are called "*retired allowances*;" which means salaries, or parts of salaries, still paid to persons who have been in public employ, but who have, from no matter what cause, ceased to be in that employ. So that, for every office that there is, we have two, three or four persons to pay. Upon what principle of reason or of justice; upon what practice, ever heard of amongst men, are we taxed to pay these allowances? If a merchant, or manufacturer, or farmer, or anybody else, were called upon to pay his clerks or workmen, who were no longer in his service, I wonder what answer they would make to the call; but, if a *law* were passed to effect this purpose; if a law were passed to

compel manufacturers, for instance, to maintain every workman who had worked for them till he was worn out, for the rest of his life, would they not say that that was a most unjust and wicked law? Yet this case that I am speaking of is a great deal worse: for nineteen twentieths of these persons are not half worn out. If, indeed, they had been *forced* into the several offices, as seamen and soldiers are sometimes forced to become seamen and soldiers, it would be quite another matter. So far from being forced into these offices by the public, they and their patrons generally force the public to take them into their employ. They are very often reared up by their parents for the express purpose of being forced into the offices, even against the wish of the Ministers themselves; and when a new Ministry comes in, it generally turns out whole shoals of these clerks and others, in order to make room for their own set; so that we have always two, and sometimes three, offices to pay on account of the same office. Before Sir Anthony Hart died the other day, we were paying three Lord Chancellors for Ireland, one in office, and two out; we are now paying two Lord Chancellors for England, one in, and one out; and, as Lord ELDON is a pretty tough fellow, and as the concern is in a very changeable state, I should not much wonder if we had another to pay before the next year be out. We have about fifteen ministers at foreign courts, and we are always paying more than half a hundred. Whenever you see a dozen clerks in an office, reckon that we have three dozen to pay for that office. Why, gentlemen, was there ever such a monstrous thing as this heard of before in the world? Thus it is that we stagger along under these burdens. The Americans have ten ministers at the courts of Europe; and ten they pay, and no more. They change them very often; they do not let them stay till they get too closely connected with the governments to which they send them; but, the moment they go back, they cease to pay them. When we cease to have any given service performed; for instance, if we no longer keep on a certain department of revenue, we discharge the officers, of course, but we *continue to pay them*. Some of them have *contingent* pay or pensions. The renowned Huskisson, for instance, took care, in the year 1799, to have a pension of 1,200*l.* a year granted to him for his life, at all times when he should not be receiving more than 2,000*l.* a year for an office; and, as he might die, he took care to have a pension

settled on his wife for her life, in case of his death, for 600*l.* a year ; at the time when this was done, he had never been anything but an under-secretary to Dundas. It is nonsense to talk of the Reform Bill, gentlemen, unless you send men firmly pledged to put an end to these practices.

With regard to the *half-pay* : but, first, I had forgotten to mention a striking instance of this retired-allowance work. The public seem to congratulate themselves that Sir Byam Martin, who was in some of the offices of the navy, was turned out the other day, he having voted against the Reform Bill. Sir Byam, like a mouse in a barley-mow, was bred in the concern ; and the navy is full of his young ones. But though turned out of his office, he loves us too well to part from us, and he remains to be paid by us at the rate of 800*l.* a year, a retired allowance. The character of those who serve this generous nation is indelible ; once in our service, always in our service till death. Priests were formerly said to be married to their churches. With much more truth these fellows may be said to be married to our money ; for when once they get their hands in our poekets, those hands never come out again till pulled out by the hand of death. If we appoint an ambassador he serves us four years ; but we pay him for life. Thus it is in every case. If a commission be appointed, no matter of what sort, or for what purpose, the commissioners are commissioners for life ; that is to say, however short a time the commission ought to endure, the commissioners continue to receiye pay to the end of their lives. Much about forty years ago ; indeed, *thirty-eight years ago*, a commission was appointed, agreeably to the stipulations of a treaty entered into with the American Government, in the year 1794, to arrange matters which were in dispute between the two Governments, relative to claims which each had on the other for real or pretended pecuniary injuries or wrongs. The commissioners on our part were a Mr. Thomas Macdonald, a Mr. Rich, and a Mr. Guille-mard. This commission commenced its operations, or the commissioners began to receive pay from us, just about two years after I was married ; and if the commissioners be still alive, they have received pay to this day. I remember seeing in the public accounts, a charge on account of these commissions, *no longer than five or six years ago*, or thereabouts. In consequence of the commission, and which indeed was the object of it, certain English merchants obtained payment of debts, which, during the rebellion, had been con-

fiscated by the American states ; but, gentlemen, do mark, I beseech you, that the whole of the money obtained by this commission from the Americans did not amount to so much as the cost of these commissioners, while, on the other hand, the claims which the Americans had on us, we have had to pay to an enormous amount ! Observe, too, that the American commissioners were forced to wind up their part of the concern pretty quickly ; and they were paid only for the time that they were actually employed. And, accordingly, the working people in America are well clad and well fed, while those in England are in rags and half-starved.

But, perhaps, the most curious instance of all of the imperishable nature of offices in our service, is that of the commissioners of the Nabob of Arcot's debts. It is now between fifty and sixty years ago since the East India Company took away, upon some ground or other, the dominions of a prince in Indostan, who was called the Nabob of Arcot. How they disposed of him I do not know ; but there being certain parties to whom he was in debt, they came to our Government with claims for payment. Whereupon a commission was appointed to inquire into the nature of these claims, and to settle and liquidate the debts. This commission has existed from that day to this. It consists of a chairman and a parcel of inferior commissioners, who have a secretary, clerks, door-keeper, and a fine house for an office, with abundance of candles and of coals ; and there stands an account of them all in the COURT CALENDAR, this commission being one of the regular established institutions of the country ; costing, probably, in charges for stationery and every thing, not less than from ten to fifteen thousand pounds a year, more than half as much as is required to carry on the whole of the civil Government of the United States of America. The head commissioner, for about twenty-seven years past, has been Sir BENJAMIN HOBROUSS, the venerable father of the patriotic member for Westminster. So that even the pap of this latter has been paid for by us. Sir BENJAMIN being dead, it is more than probable that the son will succeed him in his office, as well as in his title of baronet ; but it is also much more than probable that Sir Cam will be called upon to refund a part at least of this large sum of money, with which, doubtless, the father purchased that which remains behind. If this be not the case in some thousands of instances, little indeed would I give for the per-

liamentary reform. In spite of boroughmongers, I can live very happily amongst the woods and the fields ; but if I quit them, for a seat in Parliament, it shall not be for long, unless effects like these be produced by the reform. It has been said, and even in this town, and cast as a sort of reproach upon me, that the putting forth of my propositions caused the late Reform Bill to be thrown out. Well, then, the propositions did good, for everybody allows that the present bill is better than the last ; and, if this illustration of the propositions should throw out the present bill, we shall get a better still, according to all the analogy of reasoning. Besides, we have gained this great point ; the new bill having passed in the face of those propositions, we have a right to conclude that the House of Commons, who have now carried the bill, two to one, mean, as a matter of course, that the bill is to be productive of the measures pointed out in those propositions. However, gentlemen, mean what they will, I here tell them plainly what I mean ; and if this illustration of my meaning cause the throwing out of the present bill, out let it be thrown ; for I will not disguise my sentiments and intentions, be the consequence what it may. But, gentlemen, the short statement of the case is this : the bill must have those effects which I have been pointing out, or it will only produce that disappointment and rage in the people which must end in a terrible convulsion : I can plant cabbages, and do other things that I like, without any other mortification and disgrace than those of living under the borough-mongers ; but I cannot be a member of Parliament, and suffer these audacious plunderings of the people to go on without being covered with infamy.

To come now in real earnest to the half-pay, or *dead weight*, as it is called. In the first place, it costs the nation very nearly as much annually as the whole revenue of the kingdom amounted to at the time when his present Majesty was born. It amounts to twice as much, very nearly, as the whole of the sum which is required to carry on the government of the United States of America, civil, military, and naval ; including the interest of the debt of that country. Why, then, what a monstrous thing is here ! During the last peace, the half-pay or dead weight did not amount to more than 200,000*l.* a year : now it amounts to nearer six millions than five ! Let us, therefore, see, if we can, upon *what principle* it is that the nation is loaded with this intolerable burden. Those who re-

ceive this pay are persons whose services are no longer wanted by the country. The principle, upon which the pay is given, is stated to be, that it is a *retaining fee for future services*, and *not a reward for past services*. I beg you to mark this well, gentlemen. It cannot be a reward for past services; if it be, we live under the most odious tyranny in the world. For it is notorious, that every Ministry, whenever they please, scratch any man's name, without cause assigned, out of the military and naval half-pay and pension lists. Thus, then, it is not a reward for *past services*, but a retaining fee for *future services*. And now, mark, I do beseech you, that none of these persons can ever be employed again, according to their own regulations; for they have a military and naval academy, filled with the sons and relations and dependents of the aristocracy and clergy, out of which academies all the new officers are to come. Hitherto, indeed, officers have, sometimes, if connected with the nobility and clergy, been taken from the half-pay; but soldiers never are taken from the pension list, unless scratched out of it for some offence which they give to the Ministry or the magistrates. Very few have been taken from the half-pay to fill up vacancies; and it is manifestly intended that the new officers shall be supplied from the academies (of which I shall speak more fully presently) for the excellent purpose of breeding gentlemen and ladies for us to keep, while projects eternal are on foot to get the labouring and productive classes out of the country, on account of a pretended over population! And, if these things be still to remain, will any one have the audacity to say that this will be a parliamentary reform? This I will say, at any rate; that if these things be suffered to remain, while these northern towns have the power to choose men to represent them, that which the people of these towns have hitherto suffered is nothing compared with that which they will deserve to suffer.

To give half-pay, as a retaining fee for future services, is the right principle on which to grant it; for the parties receiving it may, under certain circumstances, be wanted, to hold themselves in readiness to serve again. As a reward for *past services*, it is as unjust as the granting of the retired allowances before mentioned. These men were not compelled to go into the army and the navy. They allege, that they have spent their *best days* in the service, and that it is too late now for them to take up any other pursuit in life. Very well, but this is their own affair. If, indeed, they had been *impressed* into the army or navy, then the nation would

be bound to support them for the rest of their lives, and that too, without being very scrupulous, as to the means they might have of maintaining themselves; 'but, if a man enter voluntarily into the navy or the army; if the indulgence of his own taste, if his desire to live without labour, if his vanity, or anything else, induce him to enter into that way of life, and especially, which is almost always the case, if he get into it in consequence of his own solicitation, and of some undue influence being made use of to get him into the service, what claim has such a man to an hour's remuneration beyond the extent of that service? If I be asked how such a man is to live after he quits the service, or after he has been discharged from it, I answer, that he should have put that question to himself before he voluntarily, or by virtue of solicitation, got into it. He has been receiving, at least, four or five times as much as a private soldier, and he ought to have saved something during his service to keep him afterwards, if he chose not to go to work, just as other men do. In short, he makes a bargain with the nation to serve it for so much pay; he receives the pay punctually, as long as the service lasts; and when the service has ended, whether from his own desire, or from the will of the employer, he ceases to have any just demand upon the nation on account of that service. To receive half-pay, forms no part of the bargain; it can form no part of it; because he can, at any moment, be dismissed from the service at the sole nod of the Ministry of the day; he can be also scratched off the half-pay list at the sole will of the Ministry; and in either case, without any cause assigned; and that, too, upon the ground that the half-pay forms a retaining fee for future services, and that the King can, at any time, tell the party that he has no longer any occasion for his services. If all other views of the matter failed of producing conviction with regard to the justice of lopping off this heavy charge, this view of it would; namely, that the military and naval half-pay and pensions being a retaining fee for future services, what right has any man to complain that the nation gives up its claim on his services? It were a jest indeed for a man to say, You use me ill in not holding me bound to venture my life for you in future! In short, the plea is a mere pretence for taking money out of the pockets of the people, and giving it to the sons and other relations and dependents of the aristocracy. That's it, gentlemen; and it's nothing, neither more nor less, but that.

But, gentlemen, even at the risk of fatiguing you, I must

not here stop my remarks upon this affair of the dead-weight. This is not a question of a few pounds, or of a few thousands, or hundreds of thousands, of pounds. It is a question of millions a year. It relates to a larger annual sum of money than is given in parochial aid for the relief of the whole of the working people of the kingdom; and I have always reproached the farmers, when I have had them sitting or standing before me, for making such an outcry about the five millions a year or thereabouts, which is all that is given really in relief of the poor, while they never utter a word of complaint relative to the greater sum given to the dead-weight. They rail eternally against the helpless labourers, of whose sweat they have had the profit; but not a word do they say against the dead-weight, who do nothing but eat, drink, and swagger about the streets and the roads, or sit at benches of magistrates to transport men for what is called poaching; and in other cases to transport them, or imprison them for life; and to inflict fines on men for evading the payment of taxes, out of which taxes come their means of living in luxury, or without work.

Nevertheless, if the thing afforded us any chance of cessation, I should be less disposed to press it upon your notice; but here is no cessation; this dead-weight forces upon our minds the recollection of the at once sublime and awful description of St. Paul, who (having spoken of the burden of his sins) exclaimed, in allusion to the practice of tying the dead body of the murdered man on the back of the murderer, till he died also from the stench, "Who shall deliver me from the body of this death!" Thus also we may exclaim with regard to this dead-weight, Who shall deliver us from the body of *this* death! If, like annuities in general, the half-pay ceased with the life of the party, it would be quite another matter: the sum would have been reduced more than one-half, whereas the amount of it is now greater than it was the year after the close of the war; for, in the first place, men have been allowed to sell their half-pay; *old* men have sold their half-pay to *young* men; and, in the next place, the widows of half-pay officers have a pension for life, and their children until they be a certain number of years of age; so that here is at once a premium for matrimony, and a premium for breeding idlers at the expense of the industrious classes, while my Lord Howick is tormenting his brilliant imagination for the means of getting the working-people out of the country; all the agricultural distress, according to him,

being produced by a surplus population! So that this dead-weight is eternal, unless the reform furnish the shears to cut off the thread of its existence.

However, while I insist that strict justice would demand the cutting of it off entirely; and that too, without sparing any one man or woman of the dead-weight, with whom I happen to be acquainted; there are certain cases in which that *scrupulous examination*, which is spoken of in the proposition, would result in a suggestion to continue the half-pay, and especially to officers of the navy. The regulation of the last peace was, that officers who had been wounded in the service, and who had long served in dangerous situations, should continue for life to receive their half-pay. The widows, also, of officers slain in the service, and of those who had lost an eye or a limb, or had been otherwise severely wounded in battle; these cases were provided for, and I would have these cases provided for in the present instance. For, other than this, the generosity of the nation would not suffer it to be niggardly upon this score, if its other burdens were taken off; and, for my own part, I should be willing to contribute my share towards the half-pay to any officer that had been more than once in the face of an enemy out of the kingdom, and had with that enemy exchanged a shot in anger. From the widows of officers who had been serving nearly all their lives, the nation could not withhold their pensions or half-pay; but, besides the bad policy of the thing; besides the inevitable mischievousness of the tendency of giving pensions to women married to officers *after they became half-pay officers*; besides the stupid policy of this, the thing is so clearly unjust; it is so manifest a robbery of the industrious classes; it is such a barefaced and audacious insult to the understanding of the nation, that a man who will give his vote for another, as a member of Parliament, without that other pledging himself most solemnly to do his utmost to remove this oppression; the man who will give his vote, without receiving this pledge, ought to be deemed a slave by nature, and to be trampled under foot.

We now come to the last part of the first proposition; namely the salaries to be paid to persons in the Ministry, and other persons wanted to carry on the affairs of the country, exclusively of the King and his royal family; for of these I shall have to speak by-and-by. The proposition states that these salaries should be, if I could have my will, reduced to the American standard; and cousin Jonathan should no longer

have to taunt us with our dear government. And why should they not be so reduced? I defy any man to state a *reason* why this government should not be as cheap or cheaper than that. This American standard is this, that the whole of the civil government of the United States, president, his ministers, his ambassadors, and other ministers to foreign courts, all the clerks, in all the offices; the judges, and all other officers of courts of justice; every person belonging to the civil government, including those civil officers who direct the affairs of the army and the navy, including also the pay to the members of both houses of congress, and all the expenses attending the holding of the session of the legislature, amount to a sum less than ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND pounds sterling a year; while (hear it, you who are now to have the power of choosing members of Parliament) Sir James Graham showed, that ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN persons belonging to the privy council, and chiefly belonging to the two Houses of Parliament, and excluding the royal family and the bishops, some of whom belong to the Privy Council; he showed, the winter before last when he was out of place, that ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTEEN of these persons received, amongst them, annually, SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS of the public money; and still he called the House of Commons, who permitted this, "*the noblest assembly of freemen in the world*," which was certainly true, if nobleness and freedom mean the taking of money away from the industrious people of the nation, great part of whom are pinched with want, and giving it to themselves, their relations, and dependents, to support them in idleness and luxury. Sir JAMES still belongs to the noblest assembly of freemen in the world; he is now one of the Privy Council himself; and even one of that select part of it which is called the cabinet; and Sir JAMES, since this his translation, has never uttered a single syllable about the 113, and about their 650,000.

One argument (impudently enough, to be sure) used, in order to afford a pretext for this heaping the public money upon these persons, under the name of salaries, is, that unless you give high pay you cannot have the benefit of high talent in your service; that even in the vulgar-minded transactions with the butcher, if you will have the best beef, you must give the best price; and it has often been objected to my economising doctrines with respect to salaries, that I have always contended that the best beef was not only the best,

but the cheapest in the end ; and this is not only correct, but I am ready to apply it to the subject of salaries ; only, the misfortune to us is, that we do not get the best talents, but the worst, if we are to judge from the effects : we are not suffered to go to the shop to pick out the best beef ; we are shut out by a monopoly : there is somebody to choose the mess for us ; and it is chosen precisely in that manner which is calculated to give us the worst that can be found. Some years ago, when men in power were a little more light-hearted than they are at present, and very prone to be jocose, in answer to our complaints on the score of salaries ; at the time when Canning set the House in a roar of laughter by an alliterative jest in speaking of the "*revered and ruptured Ogden* ;" at the time when this despicable jester, who was at once as noisy and as hollow as a drum, was calling the reformers a "*low degraded crew* ;" about the time, or a little before, a jest, which we find put forth by the late Mr. Windham, and which I have related several times, was the standing answer to every one who complained of the squandering of our money in high salaries. The jest consisted of a story of a farmer who went up to London from the country, and having a very bad toothache, was taken to an expert operator, who whipped it out in a moment, giving the patient hardly any pain ; but when he came to ask what he had to pay, and the operator told him a guinea, he exclaimed "A guinea ! " why, Tom the blacksmith of our village would have dragg'd "me all round the room by the head for a shilling ! " This story was always followed with an applauding laugh by the honourable persons in both houses, but they never had any man amongst them with sense and with spirit sufficient to tell them that they *were not expert operators*, that they in fact demanded the guinea instead of the shilling due to Tom the blacksmith ; for that no ignorant and clumsy blacksmith ever dragg'd poor chopstick round the room with more violence and less feeling than they have dragg'd this nation up and down and round about. No maxim is truer than that which tells us that we are to know the plant by its fruit, and, that men do not gather grapes from thorns, and figs from thistles. Look, then, gentlemen, at the fruit which we have gathered and are gathering from the salaries in question. Look at Peel's Bill and its effects ; Brown-bread Bill of the year 1801 ; look at the laws for spending millions of English money in the Highlands of Scotland, to PREVENT EMIGRATION, while money was actually expending at the same time,

to cause the labourers of England to emigrate ! Look at the bill for putting out the small paper money in the year 1828 ; look at the bill for drawing it in again, passed in the year 1826 ; look at the dreadful ruin inflicted upon hundreds of thousands of virtuous families, by the tossing up and pulling down the value of money ; look at the blunder after blunder, the blind, the obstinate proceedings of these "expert operators ;" and, to cut short the detail, look at the recent scheme, actually put into the shape of a bill, and passed by the House of Lords, for putting a stop to acts of arson ; to put a stop to the destruction of ricks by fire, by granting *licenses to farmers*, to set guns and traps, to catch the labourers by the legs, or shoot them through the body, and containing a provision, at the same time, that the permission to set these engines should be confined to *enclosures*, while nine-tenths of the stacks are actually standing in the open fields !

Look at all these things, gentlemen, and say, whether, if this nation had been in the hands of any thirteen chopsticks at 1s. 6d. a day ; or even in the hands of any thirteen babies, in any thirteen cradles in Manchester, blunders more gross, and mischiefs more deadly, could have been inflicted upon us. But, why need we bring any charges of this sort against them ? They stand self-convicted ; they allow the country to be in a state, out of which they are unable to bring it. They allow that its state cannot be made worse : they allow that they know not what to do in Ireland. We saw one Minister actually driven from his place by public indignation. Every man must acknowledge, and they themselves do acknowledge, that they know not what is to happen next ; well, then, having now, for just forty long years, having had all the resources of this great and most favoured country at their absolute command ; having had our purses and our persons as completely in their power, as, taking the beautiful simile of St. PAUL, the clay is in the power of the potter ; having made war, having made peace, and *having been victorious in war too* (or else they are the greatest vain-boasters that God ever made) ; having done just what they pleased with this whole kingdom ; having abrogated innumerable ancient laws ; having made as many new acts as they pleased ; having made new crimes without number ; having punished our bodies as they liked ; and, as to our property, having made so many liens upon it, that no man has anything which he can

properly call his own; having had the power to do all these things; and having at last come to the acknowledgment that they can go no further, without an appeal to the people, and without having their advice and assistance, how can they now have the face; high as is their blood, and accustomed as they have been to say and do what they liked, how are they now to find the face to tell us, that they are "*expert operators*," and that we are to continue to pay them high salaries, in order that we may lead lives of security and happiness?

There is one quality belonging to them so peculiar as to deserve particular notice; that is to say, the quality of getting rich themselves, and going on increasing regularly in riches, while the nation, whose affairs they manage, has been getting poorer and poorer. Like the masters of our workhouses, their piety, or something else, brings such a blessing on them, and makes them so fortunate, that they, like the master of the hospital mentioned in the Spanish romance (from whom, if he had not been bound by an oath of celibacy, I should really be disposed to think that our rulers were descended), invariably got *rich*, by taking care of the concerns of the *poor*. If I had the time, and if I dared so much to trespass upon that patience on which I have too much trespassed already, I could give a list of about one hundred of them off-hand, whose piety of *this sort* has produced most wonderful revolutions in their state of life. Not to mention the Duke of WELLINGTON, who enjoys more from the public purse of England than the annual cost of the American president and all his ministers and ambassadors and their secretaries and clerks, including, of course, the rental of the monstrous grant of SEVEN HUNDRED THOUSAND pounds sterling, as a reward for those "*victories*," as they are called; the effects of which are all now swept away; not to mention the monstrous sinecures of the late Marquis of BUCKINGHAM, and the present Marquis of CAMDEN; not to mention the equally monstrous sinecures of GARNIER and Lord ARDEN, and the WINDHAMS, brothers of Lord EGBEMONT; not to mention these things, nor to poke about after the estates which have been purchased by the money; look only at LONG and VANSITTART. The former was a mere clerk somewhere or other, before he was made a secretary of the treasury under PITT; and in that capacity I knew him just thirty years ago. He is now a peer

and is called Lord FARNBOROUGH, having a thumping estate, near that little village which is in Kent. The same county has the honour and happiness to contain a village which gives the title of Lord BEXLEY to VANSITTART. About thirty-four years ago, VAN regularly carried a *brief bag* to the court of quarter sessions in Berkshire; but, Van, following his high destiny, went up to London, and having written a pamphlet applauding the economy of Pitt, and the war against France, VAN became a "COMMISSIONER OF SCOTCH HERRINGS." From this he became a Secretary of the Treasury, under ADDINGTON; and under LIVERPOOL he became Chancellor of the Exchequer. This personage signalized his career by divers remarkable acts, two only of which I think it necessary to mention. In 1811, he moved, in the House of Commons a resolution, stating that a *one pound note and a shilling were equal in value to a golden guinea*; and in 1819, HE being still Chancellor of the Exchequer, the Government brought in a bill, founded on a report, which declared that *a one-pound note and a shilling had never been worth a golden guinea* since a period long prior to 1811. That VAN should become a peer after this will surprise no man; but what may reasonably surprise every man, and indeed fill every man with admiration, is the *exemplary* economy which must have marked the life of LONG and VAN, and all such fortunate persons! "A penny saved is a penny earned," says the proverb; and how saving these gentlemen must have been, then, to be able to purchase such fine estates! They *might*, indeed, have possessions of their own, of which a man in my state of life was not likely to be informed, but there presents itself to us another still greater subject of praise and admiration, namely, that, though possessed of such great pecuniary means, they humbled themselves to become mere clerks and "commissioners of Scotch herrings," from their anxious desire to assist in taking care that their beloved country was not cheated in any of its *mighty* pecuniary transactions.

All this, however, though tending greatly to mitigate my hostility to high salaries, does not take out of my wishes, and *out of* my propositions arising from them, the part which describes a resolution to reduce salaries to the American standard; without being enabled to enforce which resolution, I would not remain in the Parliament two years; and without a pledge, a distinct pledge, to support me with all

their might in an endeavour to accomplish this object; I would not receive even from the people of Matinester one of those seats which it will be in their power to bestow.

We now come to the *standing army*: and the first question that presents itself to us here is, what we can want this standing army for. We have already been at peace sixteen years; and every time the Parliament either meets or separates the King assures us, from his own lips, that the continuance of peace with all the powers of the world becomes more and more certain. During the last peace the regular army cost the nation less than one million of pounds in the year. It now, including everything, costs nearer eight millions. What, then, do we want this standing army for, which now consists of more than one hundred thousand men? The common notion is, that it is wanted to support the Government; and I wish men had a clear conception of what the word *government* means. Our Government is to be found in each county; just as the Government of the United States is to be found in each state, with this difference, that their state governments are not near so expensive as our county governments are. Let us look at our county governments, however, which are, in their form and manner, stripping them of their abuses, just what they were seven hundred years ago, and are the very best governments in this world. *What is government*, and what is its business? Its business is simply to keep the peace; to take care of men's persons and property, and to give to people all the enjoyments which nature tenders to them, as far as the mutual safety of the whole will permit. To effect these objects, we have in each county a chief magistrate called a Lord-Lieutenant, appointed by the King; he has deputy-lieutenants appointed by himself; and that they are men of spirit we know from the circumstance of one of them having called to account even a minister, who, poor man, seems to have felt the superiority of his antagonist. We have justices of the peace in abundance, holding their petty sessions in every small district, and bringing their collective wisdom to a sessions of the whole county once every quarter of a year. We have, in case of emergency, a sheriff to call out his *posse*, to protect persons and property. The *posse* being thought insufficient, we have one, two, or three battalions of militia in each county, ready to be called out by officers already appointed. This is the Government of England. This is English Government; and, in God's

name, what do we want with more? What do we want with an army to cost us, besides our county governments, seven or eight millions a year? God has drawn the waters around us; and by all that he has done for us, seems to have said to us, "Be wise and be virtuous, and be the "greatest, the freest, and the happiest people in the "world"; what, then, gentlemen of Manchester, are we to cast these blessings from us? Are we impiously to reject what appears to be the commands of Providence itself; and are we still, though left to choose for ourselves, to encumber ourselves with this standing army, with this burden, which presses us to the earth, and which exists in open violation and defiance of all those principles which were the guide of our free and happy forefathers? If you cannot rouse yourselves, so as to make a pledge to cast this burden and this disgrace from you, by these legal means, which the law will now so amply put into your hands, think not of me, but find some other to be the bearer of your irresolute and slavish behests.

How many times were we promised that the long, bloody, devastating, cruel, and wasteful war which was waged against the republicans of France, should give us "*indemnity for the past and security for the future?*" The distresses of the nation, the unparalleled miseries of Ireland, the confusion in the affairs of the wisest and most punctual of men; the still enormous amount of the taxes, tell us whether we have gained indemnity for the past; while the fires in the south, the menacing attitude of Ireland, the building of carriages *to convey foot soldiers swiftly by land*, and the existence of a standing army of a hundred thousand men, ask our rulers in a voice of angry thunder, whether they have given us security for the future. Go and ask the parson in Ireland; go and ask the big farmer in Norfolk or in Wiltshire, who, most likely, was a yeomanry-cavalry man, for the purpose of keeping down jacobins and levellers, whether the wars of PITT, DUNDAS, and GRENVILLE, of ADDINGTON, PERCEVAL, and LIVERPOOL, whether the victory of Waterloo, to celebrate which they roasted whole sheep and whole oxen; go now, and ask them, when they are sleeping with their clothes on by night, and have watches to wake them, in case of danger; ask them, whether *the wars and the victories* have brought them security for the future?

Blackstone, the great teacher of our laws, though a court sycophant, tells every student that the laws and constitution

of England know nothing of a standing soldier ; that those laws hold barracks, inland fortresses, and everything tending to make the soldier a character different from the citizen, in abhorrence ; that those laws, in their very principle, forbid any thought of keeping the soldier in a state of separation from the people ; that, when men have arms put into their hands, and are embodied for the purposes of war, they ought to be disbanded, and become citizens again the moment the war is over ; that the character of a soldier can never be permanent consistently with the laws of England ; that the citizen becomes a soldier only for a temporary purpose, and then returns to his character of citizen again ; and that, in whatever country there is a permanent standing army, there can never be, and never was, anything worthy of the name of public liberty.

Well then, gentlemen, this is not an "*institution of the country*" at any rate. I am not here recommending anything hostile to the institutions of the country, unless the great teacher of our laws knew not what those institutions were.

But, as if our rulers were determined to leave nothing undone, in order to make the Government of England precisely the contrary of that which Blackstone says it is, not only have they made a permanent standing army, in time of peace ; not only are they in time of peace continually augmenting that army, not only do they by the means of barracks, fortresses, depots, and other establishments, carefully keep the soldiers separated from the people ; not only have they made it death by the law, in any man to attempt to seduce a soldier from his duty ; not only do they keep up the enormous half-pay ; not only have they numerous bands of military officers ON FULL PAY, and engaged in no service at the same time, which they call UNATTACHED officers ; not only these have they done, and these things they do, but they have establishments for the purpose of taking children from their homes at a very tender age, keeping them shut up in what they call a military academy, which is an enormous building, standing in the midst of the wildest heath in the kingdom, at a great distance from all the habitations of men, there to be cut off from the rest of the people, to have their minds formed in a purely military mould ; to imbibe no feelings common with the people at large, taken so young as to require *nurses* to attend them ; an establishment, in short, the very outline of which conveys to the mind of every man who con-

templetes it, a complete conviction with regard to the motives from which this establishment was made.

If some one, when Blackstone first published the book of his Commentaries, had told him not to be too positive, for that one PRATT, and one GRENVILLE, and one PERCEVAL, would arise, who would establish academies blowing all his English constitution to the air, what would he have said? Without, however, stopping to answer this question, you shall know what I say, gentlemen; that is this, that I will be the representative of no body of men who will not pledge themselves to support me with all their might, in my endeavours to cause these academies to be put down, and to cause a legal sale of the materials of which they are composed, to go towards a fund for the liquidation of the debts alleged to be due to the fundholders.

It is not a small aggravation of the evil of these last-mentioned establishments, that the expenses of them are defrayed out of the general taxes raised upon the nation, and, as none but the sons of the rich, or the dependents of the rich, can, in the nature of things, be admitted into these academies, the middle and working class are here compelled to pay for the education of the sons of the rich and their dependents, and, as all the future commissioned officers of the army are to come out of these establishments, a private soldier never can again become a commissioned officer, so that the immense sums of money which we pay on this account are not only for the purpose of educating the sons of the rich and their dependents, but, in effect, for securing the exclusion of our own children from all possibility of ever shining in military rank, honour, and emolument, however distinguished their conduct, their genius, or their valour. In this academy, as the accounts laid before Parliament tell us, there are *nurses*, teachers of French, teachers of music, teachers of dancing, teachers of drawing, teachers of grammar, and of arithmetic; so that, gentlemen, without the smallest misrepresentation or exaggeration, here are multitudes of the sons of the nobility and clergy and gentry, and the dependents of these, educated in the most open manner, out of those taxes, nine tenths of which are paid by the middle classes and the working people of this country. Gentlemen, the Reform Bill is a deception; it is mere sham; it is a mere thing wherewith to cheat the people, unless it send men having a firm determination to use their utmost endeavours legally to put down these monstrous abuses.

For my own part, great honour as I should deem it to be chosen to represent the people of Manchester, provided they were ready to pledge themselves to labour with me, with all their heart and all their soul, for the effecting of these objects, I say over and over again, that I would reject, as nothing worth, their election of me, if they were willing for these things to continue. It has been my lot, my very honourable lot, to produce great effect, by every literary effort of my life. I stand now in this state, and never will I sink down into insignificance: a great change shall be produced, a very great change; one that will completely renovate the nation; one that will, in a short time too, make it what it once was, and what it always ought to have been. To see this accomplished, and by peaceable means, is a desire more ardent than any that ever before found its way into my heart; but if I find that there exist not the means of accomplishing this, my name shall never be associated with any of the miserable shufflings by which the accomplishment of this object shall be prevented.

LECTURE III.

28th December, 1831.

GENTLEMEN OF MANCHESTER,

It is my business this evening to submit to you the reasons upon which the fourth and fifth propositions are founded, and to endeavour to convince you that the measures described in them are just and practicable. I will first read them to you again.

4. To abolish tithes of every description; to leave to the clergy the churches, the church-yards, the parsonage houses, and the *ancient* glebes; and, for the rest, leave them to the voluntary contributions of the people.
5. To take all the rest of the property commonly called church-property; all the houses, lands, manors, tolls, rents, and real property of every kind, now possessed by bishops, chapters, or other ecclesiastical bodies, and all the misapplied property of corporate

bodies of every sort ; and also all the property called crown-lands, or crown-estates, including that of the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster ; and sell them all, and apply the proceeds to the discharge of the debt which the late parliaments contracted with the fund-holders.

I shall have to show, by-and-by, that, without the adoption of these measures, a reform of the Parliament must be a mere empty sound ; that, though the rest of the propositions ought to be adopted, it is absolutely necessary that these two should be adopted, and strictly acted upon ; because, without this, it will be impossible to provide the means for carrying into effect the measures which I recommend with regard to the national debt, the subject of which I am to discuss to-morrow evening. With any show of justice and humanity, this debt cannot be got rid of without an abolition of the tithes, and without an application of the other property of the church, as it is called, to the purpose of liquidating such parts of the debt as ought to be liquidated.

Many gentlemen present will recollect, that the first time that a proposition was openly made, and in print, for meddling with the revenues of the church, was in a petition of the county of NORFOLK, in the month of January, 1823. Many gentlemen here present will remember, that that memorable petition, which I had the very great honour of being permitted to draw up, and to present to the meeting, was passed almost unanimously in an open meeting, fairly assembled, in that very great and spirited county ; that, upon the appearance of this petition, which also contained a proposition for a great reduction of the interest of the debt, the whole of the London press appeared to be in a state of absolute commotion ; that the parsons called me "*infidel*," while the fundholders called me "*robber*," not appearing to perceive that I myself was in a situation of life which exonerated me from the payment of tithes, and that, at any rate, I myself owed but a very small portion of the debt ; and not appearing to perceive also, that, if there were infidelity and robbery in the proposition, the whole of the county of Norfolk, farmers, tradesmen, and working people, who met in the great hall of St. Andrew's, at Norwich, were *infidels* and *robbers*. Nevertheless, the London papers rang with accusations against us particularly, laying the whole

blame upon my poor shoulders ; and, in the fulness of their humanity, ascribed the sanctioning of the petition to the delusion practised by me upon the simple people of Norfolk.

Above all things, this proposition relative to the property of the church, was represented as "*wild and visionary*." It was called unjust, cruel, ferocious, diabolical, but utterly *contemptible* at the same time, on account of its wild and visionary character. Now, gentlemen, what is the language of these same newspapers now ? It is very well known to you all ; or, at least, to those who have done me the honour to read my writings for some years past, that I have constantly endeavoured to press upon the minds of my readers, that the passing of enclosure bills, and the moulding of several farms into one, together with the operation of the tithe system, had gone on rendering the lot of the labourers worse and worse, and that it would finally reduce them to the necessity of breaking forth into acts of violence, or submitting to a life very nearly approaching that of starvation. My readers of long standing will recollect, that when that impudent old sinecure placeman, and formerly purser in the navy, old **GEORGE ROSE**, used to cite the increase of the number of inclosure bills as a proof of the prosperity of the country, and of the *goodness of the Government*, I said these bills were laying the sure foundation of misery to the country, and adding to the chances of a final violent overthrow of the state. With regard to large farms, I have always contended, that they were a species of monopoly growing up out of the system of fictitious money ; and that, at last, if not put a stop to in time, they would produce two classes in agriculture, haughty masters, and work people whom they would deem their slaves ; the natural result of which would be a violent contention between the two at last, and something like a general convulsion. Within the last ten years, the evil having gone on increasing in magnitude, the debt and other causes of taxation having so enormously increased in weight, in consequence of the doubling of the value of money by Peel's bill ; within these ten years, I have contended that some great branch or other of expenditure must give way ; that the debt was the thing first to give way ; and that, yet, common decency, very ordinary morality and conscience, would not suffer that to be totally extinguished, until the emoluments had been taken from the aristocracy and the clergy ; and that, therefore, resort

must be had to the property commonly called church-property.

Now, gentlemen, these are opinions which I have been promulgating for the last five-and-twenty years at the least, as will be seen from those pages which will remain to be read for many years yet to come. With regard to the church-property, my opinions, openly expressed, are of about ten years standing. During these five-and-twenty years, Brougham's best possible public instructors have been constantly inculcating the great benefit of new inclosures of wastes, as they call them; the greater benefit still of putting many farms into one; the monstrous injustice of touching the property of the church; and they have been, without measure and without mercy, censuring my opinions, whenever they thought them worthy of anything beyond expressions of contempt. All this is well known to many gentlemen now present, to whom it is equally well known that these best possible public instructors have all of a sudden changed their tone, and are now far more vehement than I ever was, in censuring the greediness of landlords and farmers, in stripping the labourers of the wastes; far more vehement in censuring the monopoly of farms; and coming almost up to my mark in recommending the abolition of the tithes, and the seizure of the other church-property for public uses. If I had a bundle of their recent broadsheets, and dared so far to trespass upon your time as to rummage up their rubbishy columns, I could occupy ten evenings as long as this, in merely reading passages from these papers in confirmation of what I have heard said. I will content myself, however, with reading a passage from the *Morning Chronicle*, and from the pen of the editor of that paper, of only four days ago; namely, Saturday last, the 24th of this month of December, in the following words:—"The first effect of throwing several farms into one was favourable to cheap production. But the demoralization of the labourers was not calculated on. No man can possess property in security, with a demoralized population around him. The labourer who, while independent, was honest, now steals without scruple. The farmer finds this to his cost, when he casts up his accounts. We must retrace our steps; and the landholders, who have robbed the labourers of their little possessions, must be made to contribute to their emancipation. The real and the able-bodied poor must

" be distinguished from each other ; and where there is a redundancy of able labourers, *land must be allotted to the supernumeraries*. But without an alteration in the tithe as well as the poor system, all attempts to benefit the poor will be fruitless. *A thorough reform is required.* " And as soon as the Reform Bill is carried, that great curse of the country—the tithe tax—must be placed on a rational footing."

It is not true that throwing several farms into one was favourable to cheap production. That is not true, except cheap production means cheapness to the monopolist, and dearness to the rest of the community. But now they have discovered, then, that this amalgamation of farms tends to demoralize the labourers ; and this man says that no man can possess property in security, with a demoralized people around him. What a vast improvement we have made in words ! I do not know what *demoralized* means ; but, if it means *empty-bellied*, it is a very proper word to make use of in this case ; for, not only cannot a farmer, or landholder, or any other person, possess property in security, with empty-bellied labourers around him, but I contend that *he ought not to possess it in security*, surrounded with labourers who have not a sufficiency of food ; and it is not stealing to take, without scruple, that which is necessary to sustain life. Gentlemen, I am aware that this assertion of mine will startle some persons ; but I am sure that it will startle no one who is well acquainted with the law of either God or man ; for, according to all the laws laid down by God himself, according to the canon law, the common law, and the statute law of England, it is not criminal stealing for a man to take food or raiment, and no matter from whom, if the person himself be not in absolute want, if such taking be necessary to preserve the taker from perishing with hunger or with cold. I wish to be very explicit upon this subject : it is a matter which all persons of property ought clearly to understand : I say, then, that if a man, and the same applies to women, boys, and girls, be in want of food and raiment necessary to sustain life, and if he cannot obtain the food and raiment by supplications to private persons, or by his application to parochial authorities, he is fully justified in taking that which he wants for the purpose just mentioned, in whatever house or place he may find it, and that this justification he has, in the laws of God, in the decisions of the fathers of the Christian church in the decisions of all the great giv-

lians, and in the letter, as well as the practice, of the canon law, the common law, and the statute law of England. The poor-laws of England, provided they be put into practice, strip him of all excuse for this sort of taking ; but, if it were to happen that those laws were to fall into disuse, or to be set at defiance by the parochial officers, the right of taking would revert to every man in such a state of deplorable want. And this doctrine I am ready to maintain, in the face of all the clergy and all the lawyers of England. So that this writer of the *Morning Chronicle* may talk about *stealing* as long as he pleases ; it is no stealing to take under such circumstances ; for, as Solomon says, in the 6th chapter of Proverbs, I think it is, and the 30th and 31st verse, "Men do not despise a thief, if he steal to satisfy his soul when he is hungry." Very strange, that men should not despise a thief : and both the Catholic Bible, and the learned Grotius, who was a Protestant, say that the word thief was not in the Hebrew text, but that it was, "We do not despise a man :" and as to the word steal, it only meant secretly taking : and, to be sure, it would be monstrous indeed, and mankind would be monsters, if they were to maintain that the persons of property of any community had a right to withhold the means of existence from even any one soul in that community.

But here we have, at any rate, a confession that the scheme of throwing several farms into one has produced great evil ; and that we must "*retrace our steps.*" This is a great declaration ; for it means that we are to throw open the enclosures again ; make allotments of land to supernumerary labourers ; make them compensation for the "*robbery*" that the land-owners have committed upon them ! 'Tis not I that wrote this, gentlemen : God preserve me from so doing ; for, on a charge of sedition, how soon would the sagacious Denman have me by the heels were I to write in this manner ! I verily believe that we shall have small farms again : and if I did not believe it, I should not care a straw what became of the country ; but this is not to be effected by the grovelling means which writers like this appear to have in view. But we now come to the great matter of all ; THE TITHES ! This gentleman tells us, that all attempts to benefit the poor will be unavailing, unless there be an *alteration in the tithe system* ! It is quite amusing to observe this fresh source of anxiety with these public instructors. I have known them for thirty years, for unfeeling revilers of the labouring poor,

and particularly the writer on whose writing I am now observing ; for ten years at least I have known him for a proposer of harsh and cruel measures towards this best description of persons in the country : I have known him for a prater about *surplus population* ; I have known him for a condemner of *premature marriages* ; I have known him to recommend, like the hard-hearted and well-paid Thomas Walker, Esq., of Lambeth, to leave the poor to their *own resources*, and hanging them if they take, in order to preserve their lives ; I have known him for a reviler of the famous act of Queen Elizabeth ; I have known him for a recommender of driving the poor from the estates of the nobility in Scotland and in Ireland ; I have known him for an advocate of *compulsory emigration* ; I have known him for an advocate of the atrocious proposition to sell the dead bodies of the poorest of the poor, and thereby to terrify those that were alive from putting themselves into the hands of hospital-keepers, and keepers of workhouses : all this I have known of these *best possible public instructors*, and of this one in particular : and now I find him anxious above all things to improve the situation of the poor. Gentlemen, you know I dare not say that *the fires have done good*, and I do not say it, therefore ; but I must be an idiot not to see that it is the fires, and the very just alarm excited by that dreadful and irresistible mode of taking revenge, that have produced such a wonderful change in this very hard-hearted man.

However, all attempts are vain, he tells us, to benefit the poor, unless there be an alteration in the tithe system. There is, he tells us, a *thorough reform* required ; and that as soon as the Reform Bill is carried, that *great curse* of the country, the *TTHE-TAX*, must be placed on *a rational footing*." What a *rational footing* may mean, according to his view of the matter, I cannot tell. But it must include a taking of some part, at least, away from the parsons. This is worthy of particular attention. The alteration of which he speaks can do no earthly good to the labourers, unless it cause the parson and his family to take less of the produce of the land than they now take. What can be the use of composition, or commutation, or of any other measure, unless the parson take less than he now takes ? How am I, being a farmer, rendered better able to give sufficient wages to my labourers by the parson ceasing to take in kind, the corn, the wool, the wood, the calves, the pigs, the eggs, the milk, the lambs, the apples, and the cabbages, and all other things ; how am

I to be rendered better able to pay my labourers sufficient wages by the parsons ceasing to take these in kind, and by taking the full value of them in money ? If a man come to me, to take away any thing that I have, what do I gain by prevailing on him not to take the thing away, if he compel me to give him the full worth of the thing in money ? But there is this further disadvantage in giving him a money-right ; for, whether I have crop or no crop, he comes and demands the money ; and the money-claim gives him a right over me as a *creditor* ; a right to take my goods and seize my person ; a right which the law of tithes never yet conferred.

In short, gentlemen, by "*rational footing*," this writer must mean taking part at least of the tithes from the clergy ; and what principle is there which will sanction the taking of a part, which will not sanction a taking of the whole ? and, indeed, there is no other scheme which has anything rational in it : it is a case in which there can be no compromise ; and if you were to attempt a compromise, you would instantly get into confusion. To give the parsons the use and command of the churches ; the control over the church-yards ; all their present authority, as far as relates to these matters ; to give them the parsonage-houses, and the glebes of ancient endowment ; and for the rest, to leave them to the voluntary contributions of their parishioners for everything beyond the fees to be settled and determined by law : this would be placing the concern on a rational footing ; on a really rational footing ; and I am quite satisfied, that it would be a change greatly beneficial to the working clergy of the church, and to the religion of the church itself.

Having to maintain the proposition which I have just read to you ; having expressed my determination to forego any honour that may be tendered to me, unless those who tender it pledge themselves to support me in endeavouring to accomplish the purpose described in the proposition, it is incumbent on me to show that that which I propose is *just* ; that there is nothing in the proposition that is contrary to the law and usage of the nation ; but, as a thing may not be strictly just, though agreeable to law and usage, it is incumbent on me to show that it is just in itself ; that it is not cruel ; that is to say, unnecessarily severe. But before I do this, and in order to remove all suspicion that I have any sectarian feeling of hostility to the church itself, I think it right, as I have always thought upon similar occasions, to put forward my fair and undeniable pretensions upon this score :

In the first place then, I was bred and born in the Church of England as by law established ; that I have never, in word or deed, called in question the truth of its doctrines, or the apostolical origin of its worship ; that I have never, in any way whatsoever, impugned any of its creeds ; and that I have never joined, or leaned towards any dissent from it. But, gentlemen, my orthodoxy has a far better testimony in its favour than any professions that I can put forth, however solemn ; for some years ago, it is pretty nearly twenty, Bishop Burgess, then Bishop of St. David's, and now Bishop of Salisbury, declared in a letter, published in the form of a pamphlet, with his name to it, and addressed to Mr. Bisham, that, *of all the laymen of the Church of England, Mr. Cobbett appeared to be the only true son of that church.*

Having thus established, as I think, my impartiality, at least upon this subject, I proceed to maintain the legality and justice of taking away the tithes. The whole of the tithes collected by the clergy and lay-impropriators in England, leaving Ireland out of the question for the present, ARTHUR YOUNG, more than forty years ago, estimated at five millions a year. Suppose them to be worth that now, and I suppose them to be worth a great deal more. Alexander Baring, in the first session of 1830, stated the revenues of the church to amount to **TEN MILLIONS A YEAR**. It is possible that all these estimates may be incorrect ; but certain it is, that the tithes amount to a very great sum. Now it never can be believed that this large part of the produce of the land was intended to be given to persons who should have the name of being ministers of a church, and who should not render services in some degree proportioned to the amount of the thing given. It was property belonging to the nation, and given for the support of the morality and religion of the people. The legislators who made this disposition of the property, must have believed that it would be employed in a way to induce the people to go to the churches, there to have inculcated in their minds those principles which would tend to make them good towards men, and dutiful towards God. If this were not the motives of those who gave the tithes to this church, they were hypocritical and profigate tyrants ; and if it were their motive, as it certainly must have been, the establishment has not answered the purpose for which the tithes were given to it. It has not answered the purpose ; for do we not all know, that not one tenth part of the people ever enter the doors of the churches, while the meeting-

houses are crowded in every town and every village? The cause of this has been, not the fondness of the people for strange doctrines; not a want of piety by any means; for in spite of everything, the mass of the people are the most religious in the world, those of the United States not excepted. There is scarcely a parish in the kingdom, however small, in which we do not find one or more chapels of some sort or other, established by private and voluntary contributions; and these chapels are crowded, while the parish churches are empty. Be the cause, however, what it may, this is the fact, and in this fact we have the proof, that the establishment has failed of its object; and that some great change with regard to it is necessary, to make it once more efficient, if ever it be to be efficient, for the purposes of religion.

The fault is not, generally speaking, with those who do the work of the church; but with those who receive its revenues. The working clergy of the Church of England, are, perhaps, taking them as a body, as good men as any in the world; but those who have the benefices it is, who have destroyed the respect and veneration for the church; it being quite impossible for men to venerate an establishment which gives to one man the labour, and to another man the profit; it being quite impossible that men should remain attached to an establishment in which the example of the teachers gives the lie direct to all their precepts.

Thus far as to the utility of the establishment, and the accordance of its effects with the intention of those by whom the establishment was made; but now as to the law and justice of taking away the tithes. As to the law, we must first look into the *origin* of the tithes themselves. When we talk of taking them away and applying them to public purposes, we are answered by the astounding assertion, that they are as much the property of the clergy and of the lay-impropriators, too, observe; that they are as much their property as any man's farm-house is his property; and, I remember that the *debut* of Mr. Stanley in the House of Commons was marked by his making this very assertion. Now the fact is this, that the tithes, and that every other species of church-property, if traced back to their foundation, will be found to have been granted for purposes of *charity*; that, in every instance, the grant was made in the name of charity; that, in fact, they were grants for the purpose of supplying the faithful, not only with spiritual food, but with means for providing for their bodily wants; and that the

practice of these charities was established from the beginning," and the order of deacons was instituted for the purpose of superintending the tables at which the poor were fed. We have an order of deacons in our church still; but does ever any one hear of any tables at which they superintend the feeding of the poor from the produce of the tithes and other property of the church? The Apostles, in imitating the regulations of Moses, to prevent mendicity and misery, collected alms, in order to relieve the poor. As the church advanced, the part that was taken by the ministers was considered merely as the necessary means of preserving their lives, and not even as a remuneration for services, because that which they had freely received, they were freely to give; and, accordingly, St. Paul supplied himself with necessaries out of the fruit of his labour. This was the foundation of all landed and other property when it came to be bestowed upon the Christian church in every part of the world; but our church seems to have wholly lost sight of this, the origin of its property: it seems to regard it as mere worldly property, held by law; held by the laws of man, and by no other laws, and to be used, as other property is, solely for the benefit of the possessor, he being at liberty to carry it away from the parish in which it is raised, and spend it in St. James's street, up at LONDON, at BATH, at BRIGHTON, at PARIS, at ROME, or in shooting or fox-hunting.

However, since they will have it that they hold it by law; since they will call the church, the church by law established, that will relieve us from a great deal of the trouble which we should have to take in order to prove that tithes of all descriptions are *the property of the public and the poor*. For, if they have it by law, it must be by statute-law; and, then, we look back to this statute law, and there we find that the first statutes on the subject of tithes and all church-property, indeed, declare in the most strong and distinct terms, that this property belongs to Holy Church in trust for the poor; that this property and this trust are sacred; and that no law shall ever be made to alienate the property or enfeeble the trust. When, at a later period, we find that parochial tithes had been appropriated to ecclesiastical communities, and *vicars* (*vicariis*) had been placed in the parishes to supply the place of the rectors; and when, in consequence of these impropriations or withdrawals, the *vicars*, in some places, were left with an insufficiency to

enable them to relieve the poor in a proper manner; then we find the statute law interfering, and compelling the impropriators to leave in such parishes a sufficiency of such tithes for the relief of the poor and the indigent. So that, if they will have *law* for it, here is the beginning of the statute law.

Thus things stood when the *Protestant Reformation* came. Then came a series of statutes, or acts of parliament, relative to the church-property; and act after act, meddling with it more and more; these acts finally created this Church of England as "by *law* established;" and these acts, all taken together, took away, in spite of *Magna Charta*, in spite of the solemn ratification of it, at the beginning of every reign of perhaps twenty kings successively; in spite of the canon law, which had been in force for a thousand years at that time or thereabouts; in spite of the famous code of Edward I.; in spite of the common law, which had existed in all its force from the time of Alfred; in spite of all these, and in defiance of the word of God itself, came the series of acts of parliament before-mentioned,—took away all the church-property from out of the hands of Catholic priests, and out of the hands of Catholic ecclesiastical corporations; and gave this property partly to a Protestant and a married clergy, and partly to *mere laymen*, after which last, to talk of *sacrilege* is a mockery such as the world has seldom witnessed. Well, then, since the *law* could handle this property in this manner; nay, it did a great deal more than this, for it seized the property of *private chantries* or chapels, which were, to all intents and purposes, private property, and had never been other than private property; it seized besides, the property of guilds and fraternities, which had been established for the purpose of protecting different trades and callings: the law could do all this; the King and the two Houses of Parliament found themselves invested with legitimate power to do all these things; not only to take away all the property of the church from men of one religion, and give part of it to priests of another religion and part of it to laymen; but to do an act which would be equal to the seizing of all the Methodist and other dissenting chapels of this day, and selling the ground on which they stand, and seizing upon all the endowments of such meeting-houses and chapels.

Well, then, if the King and the Parliament could do this, and that too in these rude and unpolished times when the

schoolmaster had not yet been abroad, surely a King and Parliament can now take the same property wherever it is to be found ; surely it can take all the same church-property, whether in the hands of clergy or laymen, and dispose of it as it pleases. Indeed, the Parliament has always had a control over it ever since the church and the Parliament co-existed ; for the Parliament interfered to prevent the impropriators, when they were ecclesiastical corporations, from withdrawing from the parishes so much as not to leave a sufficiency for the relief of the poor. The tithes were, according to the rules on which the Christian Church of England was founded, to be divided thus : one third part of the amount of them was to be distributed amongst the necessitous by the priests, who were enjoined to make the distribution *with their own hands*, "in charity, mercy, and humility." They do little of this now, certainly ; and they plead the exemption given them by law. They say that theirs is a church different from the church that so distributed the tithes ; and, God knows, very different it is. When the change took place, and this law church was established, those who had seized hold of the property which was before the patrimony of the poor, very soon ceased to afford the poor any relief at all. The short and true history of the thing is this : a full third part of all the real property in England was held in trust by the priests, and by the abbeys, priories, and other conventional establishments, for the benefit of the poor ; and there never was, and never could be, except in extremely extraordinary instances, anything like misery in England. At the reformation, the King and the aristocracy, agreeing together, seized upon the whole of this property, put monied persons and their families into the livings, reserving the appointment of the parsons to themselves, and dividing amongst them all the estates belonging to the convents, and also a large part of the great tithes. Thus, therefore, they say that they have these things by *law*. Who denies it ? We know that they have them by law, and that it is our duty to obey the law ; but has the law by which they hold them set aside Magna Charta, and all the laws of England of a thousand years' standing ? Surely we may pass another law to set aside this, their law, which is not yet of three hundred years' standing.

With regard to the right, therefore, that the Parliament has to pass the law which I propose, not one single syllable more need be said. But, in order to show that the Par-

liament do still possess the clear right of doing this, the clear right of abolishing the tithes, and taking awny the other revenues of the church for public purposes, let us see what the Parliament has done in this respect, even in Protestant times ; let us see what it has done, even with this church as by law established. I beg to observe here, that this is not necessary. I beg to observe, that I have already proved enough ; for the persons must either allow that the Parliament had the right to do what it did with regard to the seizure and transfer of the property, or they must confess that the act was an act of violence and tyranny ; and it would not be convenient for them to allow that their church was built on violence and tyranny. However, by way of surplus proof, let us see what the Parliament has done with regard to this church, since it has been “*by law established.*” The Parliament has three times altered even the *service* of the church ; and at every alteration it was set forth that the persons making it were instructed so to do by the Holy Spirit. Let that pass, however, and let us come to the temporalities. In the first place, by three or four separate acts of Parliament, passed at different times, they made a *union* of parishes, putting two, and sometimes three or more livings into one, and giving the people one vicar or rector, instead of two, three, or more ; and in ill-treated Ireland they have, in some instances, moulded ten livings into one, letting nine-tenths of the churches fall down ; but, in all instances, taking care to keep up the full demand for tithes in all the parishes. Next, the Parliament has, in several instances, and particularly during the ministry of the heaven-born Pitt, actually taken away part of the real property of the church. This was done no longer ago than in the year 1798, by an act of Parliament which was called an act for the *redemption of the land-tax.* This act first imposed a perpetual land-tax, and then it provided, that any land-owner might, if he chose, redeem his land-tax ; in other words, pay the whole sum, pay the whole of the fee-simple of the land-tax down at once ; and thus free his land from the land-tax ; in other words, this act took away part of every man’s landed estate : for if you did not redeem your land-tax, the government might *sell it to your neighbour* ; and thus give him a perpetual rent-charge on your estate ; in other words, this was taking away a part of every estate in the kingdom, and selling it, to raise money to be paid into the Exchequer. This act, which violated

wills, which cut off entails, which annulled marriage settlements, and all other settlements on real estates, as far as these were necessary to effect its purposes, did not spare the church "as by law established;" and it contained a provision, authorising the bishops, deans, and chapters, colleges, and other persons holding church property, to sell part of it; and commissioners were appointed to see that the proceeds were paid into the Exchequer. The bishops, deans and chapters, colleges, and others, sold, in some cases, the *tithes* which they were entitled to receive; and thus made lands tithe-free which were not tithe-free before. Here, then, the Parliament meddled to some tune; it forcibly took away a part of the church property, and alienated it from the church for ever, putting the money into the Exchequer, for the purpose of carrying on the war. What is meant then by those who pretend that the Parliament has no right to meddle with this property? If it could thus abolish part of the tithes, for the purpose of carrying on a war, surely it can abolish the rest, in order to enable the nation to pay off the debt contracted for the carrying on of that war!

Not only, however, with the ownership of this property has the Parliament been constantly meddling, but it has meddled also as constantly with the *revenues* of the property, and particularly with the revenue, arising from tithes. In 1713, and again in 1813, acts of Parliament were passed to compel the owners of livings to give their curates, when they had curates, certain specified sums, in proportion to the worth of the living and the extent of the population of the parish. These acts fixed the sums which the incumbents were to be compelled to give. They provided also that the curate should occupy the parsonage-house and the glebe lands, in certain specified cases and on certain specified terms. Now, if a living had been private property, what acts of tyranny were these! What should we say to the Parliament if it were to compel manufacturers to give certain specified wages to their overseers and their work-people; to compel merchants to pay their clerks certain specified salaries; to compel gentlemen to pay their stewards and butlers and other servants at a certain specified rate of wages? Why we should call such a Parliament a band of hare-brained tyrants, who had come, reeling down from Bellamy's drunk, hiccuping drunk, when they passed such a law. But viewing the tithes, as well as all the other revenues of the church, as public property, and as being completely under the control of the representatives of

the people and the peers, we see the legality of these acts of Parliament ; and, as far as they go, acknowledge their justice. The tithes being held in trust for the benefit of the people, and the rectors and vicars, generally pluralists and non-resident, having given to their curates so miserable a stipend as hardly to enable them to exist with their families ; the Parliament seeing the establishment disgraced, and the people alienated from it by this cause, acted wisely and justly, as far as it went, in compelling the incumbents to make better provision for their curates ; but with all these acts, meddling with, and disposing of, the real property and the tithes, whether in the fee or in the revenue, at its sole pleasure, there cannot remain in the mind of any sane man the smallest doubt that this is a mass of property, the remains of which, in whatever hands found, is now lawfully at the disposal of the Parliament. And would I touch the *impropriators* too ; that is to say, not the incumbents of livings, but those who own the great tithes, and in some cases the small tithes also, without being bound at all to provide any one to perform the services of the church ? I can see no reason for exemption here. No title can be shown to these impropriations higher than that of an act of Parliament. If an impropriator demand tithes of me, and I resist the payment, he has nothing to show as title but an act of Parliament, which took the tithes away from the public and the poor ; and as one act of Parliament can always be repealed by another, this reduces itself to a question of expediency and of policy, both of which will, I think, decide in favour of the repeal.

We are to consider here what is due to the nation as a whole ; and not what may affect particular individuals or classes of men. The bishops, deans and chapters, colleges, and other corporate bodies, some ecclesiastical, and some lay, are great owners of impropriated tithes. These, of course, would come under the general description of church-property. The private lay-impropriators are of two descriptions ; some who have to rest their claim upon grants direct to themselves or their predecessors ; others who are become lay-impropriators *by purchase*. But even these last do not seem to have any very valid plea of exemption from the general rule. If I have purchased an estate which, in fact, is yours, my long occupation, and my having paid money for it, does not prevent me from being ousted. These owners of impropriate tithes, may, indeed, have been in private possession beyond the length of time within which the law would restore a *private*

estate to the right owner ; but the maxim of the law is, that *no length of time weakens the claim of the church* ; and as these impro priators have never failed to resort to that maxim in maintaining their pretended rights in the exaction of tithes to the utmost extent, they cannot complain if the nation act upon the same maxim in reclaiming the property. Besides, coming to the equity of the thing, the title to such tithes has always carried down with it the vice of the original grant ; the property has always been tainted with the violence with which the impropriation was made : it was so much taken from the public and the poor unjustly, by sheer violence, and notoriously against the will of the people, and it is well known that this species of property is always deemed of less value than other property of a similar amount of rent. When a freehold farm which will let for a hundred pounds a year, is worth *three thousand pounds*, and will require purchase money to that amount, impropriate tithes that will bring one hundred pounds a year, will not sell for *two thousand pounds*. In short, the parties in possession know that the tenure is more frail. In the very nature of the transaction of transfer, an acknowledgment of *risk* on the part of the purchaser, is evident. He makes his bargain with that risk in contemplation ; he bargains for higher interest on account of the risk ; and shall he then now turn round, and say that his title is as clear from all taint, and his tenure as firm as those of a freehold estate ?

They rest on an Act of Parliament, and on nothing else. The Duke of Devonshire, for instance, is the owner of the great tithes of twenty parishes in Ireland. These tithes, as well as all others, were granted for the purposes of the three-fold division above-mentioned ; but the law now gives them all to his Grace, and leaves the wretched people of those parishes to get relief how they can. If I occupied a farm in one of his parishes, and were to refuse to give him tithes, alleging that he had no claim to them, he being no priest of the parish, he would first show me the grant from the wife-killing Henry VIII. ; and, upon not being satisfied with that, alleging that the grant was of no avail, without being authorised by law, " Ho," would exclaim his Grace, " is that all you want ? " and down he would take the statute-book, and show me the act of Parliament in a moment : whereupon I should feel joy inexpressible, knowing well, that, if an Act of Parliament could give the tithes of twenty parishes to a

layman, it never could be *scrivilege* to make another act of Parliament to take those tithes away from him.

Thus, then, that the law is on our side is as clear as daylight. Still, as I said before, that all which the law can do and does, is not always strictly just; let us now inquire into the *justice* of my proposition. In the first place, this diversion of the tithes and other revenues of the church, has done enormous wrong to the nation at large, by making it necessary to provide for the wants of the indigent by a general and compulsory tax, called the *poor-rates*: and also to provide for the maintenance of the buildings by *church-rates*, assessed and collected in the same forcible manner. I can remember the time when I thought that these taxes had always been in England: I knew that there always must have been indigent persons, and always must have been religion; and the impression upon my mind was, that these taxes made part of the country; that, at any rate, they must have been nearly as ancient as the rivers and the hills. Little did I imagine that the poor had once a great patrimony; that the third part of the whole island had been theirs, held in trust by the church, and distributed amongst them as their wants might require. Little did I imagine that the aristocracy and the King had taken away this patrimony, and divided it amongst themselves; that they had stripped the poor of all means of relief, and that they had passed laws to put iron collars round their necks, and make them slaves, even if they went a-begging to save themselves from perishing. All this I found to be strictly true however; and I found that the aristocracy, having taken the patrimony of the poor to themselves, and finding themselves, at last, in danger from the violences to be apprehended from the miseries of the poor, passed, at the end of fifty years of strife with them, a law, not to compel themselves to relieve the poor out of the estates which they had taken from the church; but to compel all the people to submit to a tax for the relief of the poor, and for the maintenance of the churches. Here we have the origin of the poor-rates and the church-rates, which now press so heavily upon us. If, instead of these poor-taxes, and church-taxes, a law had been passed to compel those who had got the church-property into their hands, to relieve the poor and maintain the churches, there would have been some show of justice in the thing; but as those who had divided the church-property amongst them, were also the makers of the laws, they took care to

keep the property to themselves, and to throw upon the people at large all the duties which the possession of the property enjoined. To restore things to their former and just state, is now become impossible. To provide for the relief of the poor, and the repair of the churches in the ancient fashion, cannot now be accomplished : the poor-laws must remain ; and the nation must be remunerated by a total abolition of the tithes, and a sale of the other parts of the property of the church. Remunerated for the past, indeed it never can be ; but it may thus be protected against the continuance of this grievous and crying wrong.

And now what injustice, what wrong shall we inflict on the clergy themselves ? *Damage* we may inflict on them ; but we do damage to a traitor when we punish him for his treason. There may be many families that will suffer from the adoption of the measures which I propose, if they be carried into execution ; but that mere circumstance is not to prevent the measures ; and we are to consider, at the same time, the millions of families that are suffering for the *want* of these measures. Amongst the sufferers would not be the *working* clergy of the Church of England, for their lot would be bettered ; and perhaps the sufferings on the part of the swollen rectors and vicars and bishops, might, and doubtless would, receive more than a compensation in the world to come. It would be the parable of *DIVRS* and *LAZARUS* verified in this world, which is a vast deal better for their rich reverences than the verification of it in the next. This too is the feeling by which I am actuated with regard to the church herself. Who that has a mother in danger of being suffocated from her indulgences of the table, does not do his best to restrain her ; to induce her to be abstinent, and use all the means of prolonging her life ? He, who in such a case does not do this, is an unnatural son ; and I in proposing these measures with regard to the church, am evincing my attachment to her, and not my hostility.

At any rate, we are not to look at the damage done to the clergy, the patrons, or the lay-impropriators ; we are to look solely at the justice and the expediency of the measure. If the bishops constantly resided in their dioceses ; if, according to the description of St. Paul, they were patterns of diligence and humility ; if they showed no greediness of gain, but sought all occasions of ministering comfort to the disciples ; if, like Timothy, they watched carefully to see that the

deacons provided plentifully the tables at which the poor were fed ; if the parsons resided constantly with their flocks, in accordance with the solemn vow which they make at their ordination, when they, on their knees, and with their hands clasped together, call God to witness that they *verily believe themselves called by the Holy Ghost to take upon them the care of souls*, and when they solemnly promise that they will tend their flocks like faithful shepherds that they will be watchful in season and out of season, to keep the tempter out of the fold, so that at last they may be able to present their flock spotless at the Throne of Grace ; if the rectors and vicars acted in accordance with these vows, and did not get four or five flocks instead of one ; if they did not, in numerous cases, go and take possession of the fold, then turn their backs on it, and never inquire after it again, except as to the shearing of the sheep ; if they did not, casting far away from them all recollection of their vows, go galloping all over the world in search of pleasure, supporting their indulgences by the means of those tithes which ought in great part to be distributed to the poor of their parishes *with their own hands, in humility and mercy* ; if this were *not* the case, and the former were the case, a proposition like that which I have submitted to you would be so manifestly unjust as to drive me from your presence : every one would exclaim, " This must be an "enemy of religion, seeing that he wants to root out "those by whom it is sustained." The contrary being, however, notorious, every just man must wish for some great change ; and as the change which I propose would be both great and effectual, we have but little more to do to show that it would be just.

The very name of parson makes him inseparable from his church. The vow that he makes at his ordination, and the legal conditions of his induction, imply constant residence with his flock. First, then, the eleven thousand, and nearly twelve thousand livings in England and Wales, are divided or distributed amongst about five thousand parsons ; so that there are more than two livings to one parson, rendering it completely impossible that, in one half of the instances, they can reside with their flocks. In the next place, it is notorious, that there are not more than about four thousand of these who reside on their livings at all, their place being supplied by miserable curates. It is equally well known that they have violated the law, openly and scandalously violated it, with regard to this matter of residence. In the

year 1799, a transaction took place, which, if you will permit me to relate it to you, will give you a correct idea of the manner in which the clergy have fulfilled the solemn vows made at their ordination and induction.

There was an act of Parliament, and here, by-the-by, you are going to see, how easily the clergy can get acts of Parliament repealed, when it suits their interests ; there was an act of Parliament passed in the reign of Henry VIII., for the purpose of compelling parish parsons to reside on their livings, in accordance with their vows. This act had been violated for many years before 1799 ; it had been set at nought, as much as if it had never been passed. If a parson were absent from his parish, and even from his parsonage-house, for a month, he was liable to a fine ; and if he were absent, during the whole year, more than thirty-one days, now a day and then a day, he was still liable to the fine. If he were absent for more than a month in the year, then he was liable to two fines, and so on. The value of money at the time when the act was passed, was about *twenty times* as great as it was in the year 1799 ; but though the delinquents had to pay only a shilling in the pound, in consequence of the change of the value of money, so general had been the non-residence, and so numerous the delinquents ; so daring the violation of the law, and the violation of the ecclesiastical vows, that the sums recoverable against the clergy amounted to something enormous. The act provided that any one might lay an information *qui tam* against a non-resident parson ; and a gentleman, whose name was Williams, who was resolved to put the law in force, laid informations against great numbers ; brought them into the Court of King's Bench ; obtained convictions upon some, and was proceeding with the rest. Whoever has seen a shot fired into a rookery in the month of June, when the young rooks are just beginning to flutter from the nest ; whoever has heard the *cawing*, the sort of half-squalling, and seen the fluttering and the dashing about of the old ones among the boughs ; whoever has witnessed this uproar amongst these feathered incumbents of the tops of the trees, may form some faint idea of the bustle among the black-coats and bushwigs, at the appearance of this bundle of *qui-tam* actions ; but no other man can have even a faint idea of their confusion. I have frequently been a witness of the former ; and having just returned from America in 1800, and not having seen enough of the corruptions in the state of things here, being a

stout supporter of things as they were, had a very fair opportunity of hearing the cawings of these clerical incumbents. I well remember breakfasting in the Temple at the time with Dr. Rennell (now Dean of Winchester), he being then master of the Temple ; and I remember that he and his wife (daughter of Judge Blackstone) entertained me with most strenuous efforts to excite my indignation against the men who had laid the *qui-tam* informations against the clergy. They called him a “ *Jacobin*” of course, and I dare say they added “ *Infidel* and *Atheist*.” I, who had been bred at the plough-tail, had grafted the soldier upon the chopstick, and had been pushed into politics in America by the violence of the Americans against England, understood no more of this matter than if I had been in China, had it all explained to me very patiently by the Doctor, and of course thought that the Doctor must be right, yet, somehow or other, I perceived that the parsons had been in fault ; and my doubts were greatly augmented by the violent railing of the Doctor against the informer. That which took place in the Temple was taking place every where. *Jacobin*, *Leveller*, *Infidel*, *Atheist*, *Traitor*, were heard, even in the streets, poured out against this Mr. Williams. After a little while, I asked a person one day why they railed so against this man ; *why they had not resided* ; and how they came to think of anything else than residing upon their livings ; upon which he told me that I was as bad as the informer himself. This was a little too much, and I, in my own mind, began to side with the informer, especially when I found that this parson had one living in Suffolk, and one living in Surrey, and that he seldom showed his face at either of them.

But what did they do with the *actions*? For there they were in the Court of King’s Bench, all proceeding regularly on, and convictions obtained upon some to a very considerable amount. The Judge Kenyon did what he could to make the progress of them slow ; but still the law with its leaden feet and iron claws was coming towards their reverences. The informer was active, and apparently inflexible ; and, in short, without a clear, an open, a barefaced act of judicial tyranny, the law must take its course. What was to be done then? How were these reverend gentlemen to be saved ? Now, gentlemen, I beseech you, and particularly the young men who are here present, to mark well that course of even-handed justice of which our rulers so frequently boast. It was manifest that nothing could save the reverend delin-

quents but a new law ; but a new law ! a law to quash actions already commenced, grounded on an Act of Parliament still in full force ; a law, in the face of the Bill of Rights, and the “ *glorious revolution*,” to have an *ex-post-facto* effect ! a law to take from the creditor (as Mr. Williams now was) the power of proceeding against his debtor, the debt being proved by an act of Parliament ! “ Come, come, Cobbett,” you will exclaim, “ bad as they are, they never could do *that* ! ” Not all at once ; to do it *all at once* would have argued a general headlong tumbling down from Bellamy’s. No, nor at twice : it took them three times to do it in ; but they did it, and that in the manner that you shall now hear. A representation was made to the Parliament of the monstrous proceedings of this enemy of the church and king ; and the Parliament did not pass a law to *quash* these cruel proceedings, but passed an act to *suspend* all process in the actions, until a certain length of time, after Parliament should meet again. The informer might *die* in the meanwhile ; being a *jacobin* and *infidel* he might commit treason or blasphemy ; at any rate, his heart might be softened. Neither took place : the Parliament met again, and the hour of recommencement of proceedings was approaching. A fresh stir in the rookery : hens as well as cocks seemed to be in motion, and the parsons began to insinuate that Mr. Pitt’s *coldness towards the Establishment was now visible*. However, before the day actually arrived, another act was passed, suspending the proceedings and actions for another year, and till after the Parliament should meet again. The informer kept hard, lived, and committed neither treason nor blasphemy ; was proof against all emollients, and, like a true son of the church, remained inflexible in his intention to enforce constant residence. ADDINGTON was now become Minister ; the two Scotts (Oh ! that pair of Scotts !) bred at Oxford, and having bred there themselves ; one of them the Lord Chancellor, and the other the perpetual member of the university ; these men now having the sway, put the extinguisher upon poor Mr. Williams. A bill was brought into the House of Commons by Sir William Scott (now Lord Stowell) ; carried through both houses with no opposition at all ; passed into a law with great rapidity ; at once, without further ceremony, quashing the whole of the actions. Well may you, gentlemen, look at each other with astonishment ; well may you doubt that there must be some mistake here : if you look in the Statute Book of 1802, you

will see that there is none. The bill provided for the quashing of all the actions which had not proceeded on to conviction; in the cases of conviction, the convicted party was to pay costs, as between attorney and client; and no penalty was levied even in these cases of conviction. There, gentlemen, that act I suppose they will call one of the institutions of the country. Now if I thought that a reformed Parliament would not revise this transaction, I would turn with scorn and contempt from the Reform Bill and all its provisions. There is, however, one thing, one consideration growing out of this memorable transaction, which is not to be deemed as nothing worth. For if the Parliament had a right to pass a law like this, in favour of the clergy; if it could thrust its strong arm even into the Court of King's Bench, and snatch these delinquents out of the grasp of the law; if it could effect this by an *ex-post-facto* enactment, who shall call in question its power to do that much gentler thing which is recommended in this my proposition? Here was an ancient act of Parliament set aside by an *ex-post-facto* law; here the law was abrogated for the express purpose of screening delinquents; surely then the Parliament can do that which is consonant with all the laws upon the Statute Book, and which is called for, for the restoration of the church religion, as well as for the restoration of the happiness of the people.

But now, something was done, to be sure, to cause an observance of this salutary act of Parliament in future. In the first place, the new law *repealed* this salutary act of Parliament. Well, why cannot we, now-a-days, repeal acts of Parliament then, relative to the Church? "But to be sure," you will say, "the new act provided for the prevention of non-residence." It did it in the manner that you shall see. The old act forbade them from carrying on farming on any land but their glebe: the new act allowed them to become renting farmers, as many of the fat ones already were. The old act forbade them to traffic in anything: the new act enabled them to become traffickers and dealers and jobbers in horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs; and this they have generally been, from that day to this: so that the taking away of their tithes will by no means deprive them of callings whereby to get their bread; and callings too, you will please to observe, gentlemen, which they *petitioned the Parliament* to permit them to carry on. "But, after all, they were to reside, to be sure, upon their livings!" Oh, that

they were, you may be sworn. This act of Parliament took care of that, I warrant you; and, in order to make their punctual residence in future quite certain, the act took away the *qui-tam* action, banished the nasty common informers, did not leave it for the people of the parish to see whether their rector or vicar was resident or not; but committed him to the superintendance of my Lord the Bishop of the diocese, omitting, however, to provide for the presence of his Lordship himself, who might be, as has been frequently the case, residing for years together in London, at Bath, at Brighton, in Paris, or at Rome. However, to make short of the matter, this law, which has been in force now for nearly the last thirty years, has so effectually enforced constant residence, that when the last return that I saw was laid before the King in council, the *eleven* or *twelve* thousand livings had only about *four* thousand resident incumbents. Look then at all this, gentlemen, and find a man, if you can, with impudence enough to pretend that this clergy, taken as a body, deserve to receive the immense emoluments of this church. If seven thousand livings out of the twelve thousand can do without resident incumbents, why not the other four thousand? The seven thousand parishes are left to poor stipendiary curates, while the rectors and vicars are pursuing their pleasures all over the world; and why not let all the parishes be served by curates, paying them that which is allotted by the Parliament itself? The curate's act passed in 1813 makes the sum from 80*l.* to 150*l.* the annual stipend for a curate. It is not you or I that fix this sum. In certain cases, the bishop may order the sum to be still lower. It is not you or I, however, that say that it is enough; but the King and Parliament have declared it to be enough. Ask a fat rector or vicar while sitting over his turtle and champaign, how it is that the inculcating of the religion of Christ can require such a table and footmen and coachmen and carriage and horses, when the apostles, who carried on the work so prosperously, required little beyond the fruit of the work of their own hands. He will answer you that the people are much altered since those primitive days; and that the clergy must make a respectable figure as gentlemen, to prevent them, and religion along with them, from being held in contempt by the people. Then ask him, before he has time to hatch an excuse, how the respect for religion is supported by his miserable curate, who is on the spot amongst his parishioners, who is the only parson that these parish-

ioners ever see. From $80L$ and less, to $150L$ a year, being the sum fixed by the King and Parliament, as the annual stipend of a curate, and as sufficient to uphold the dignity, and promote the religion of the church; the law having deemed this sufficient for these purposes in seven thousand instances out of twelve, why not take away all the tithes, and allow these stipends, throughout the whole twelve thousand? That, however, is not the best mode of settling the matter; for there are the parsonage-houses and the glebes; and these, you will please to observe, when occupied by the curate, are valued, and make part of the stipend.

Two or three facts, relative to this non-residence, and to the treatment of curates, may be worthy of attention. The late Bishop of Winchester, Bishop North, gave to his son the livings of St. Mary's, Southampton, of South Stoneham, of Old Alresford, of New Alresford, and of Medstead, and made him a prebendary of the Cathedral of Winchester, and master of the hospital of St. Cross, which is a great benefice of itself. To his son-in-law, Mr. De Grey, he gave three livings, a prebend in the Cathedral of Winchester, and made him Chancellor of that part of his diocese consisting of the county of Surrey. These two men are become Peers now, in consequence of the death of all those that stood before them in their line of descent. Peers as they are, they still hold all their livings, the church duty of which is performed by stipendiary curates; and, gentlemen, need I tell you that both these peers voted against the Reform Bill? But I will tell you that if that Reform Bill do not immediately produce an abolition of these abuses, I shall never blame them for having voted against it; but shall say that they were right, and that this people is unworthy of any parliament not chosen by boroughmongers.

The parish of Bentley in Hampshire, yields tithes to the amount of between seven and eight hundred pounds a year. The whole is a lay-impropriation, great tithes and small tithes. They are all taken away by the lay-impropriator, who pays a curate *twenty-eight pounds a year*, less money than the wages of one of the hop-garden men of that parish. There is law for this, nevertheless; and so there was, recollect, for the *qui-tam* actions, to make parsons reside; and why cannot this law be repealed, as well as that? In the parish of Lakenheath in the county of Suffolk, the great tithes belong to the dean and chapter of Ely, and the vicarial tithes to a vicar, who resides upon another living, which he

has in the county of Norfolk. The dean and chapter take about 800*l.* a year out of the parish ; the vicar takes, probably 500*l.* a year, and there is a curate doing all the duty, upon 75*l.* a year, wherewith to maintain himself, a wife and nine children, which he does by his own hard toil, by the side of the labouring man, to rear potatoes for his family. How hard would a good able cotton-spinner think it, if he were compelled to maintain such a family on such an allowance, and pay the rent of a house into the bargain ! This clergyman of the church is supposed to receive not a third part as much as the Methodist parson picks up in the same village. Is it any wonder that the church is deserted, and that sects rise up in every direction ? And, gentlemen, with cases like this staring us in the face all over the kingdom, there are boroughmongers to be found impudent enough to tell us that a reform ought not to take place, lest it should overset this "*institution of the country.*" The church itself and its worship constitute an institution of the country ; but these abuses have destroyed the institution : it is necessary that it should be restored ; to restore it, these abuses must be put an end to ; and they cannot be put an end to without a measure such as I propose.

Besides the tithes, for the taking away of which we have clear law and reason and justice, there are the incomes of the bishops, the deans and chapters, and the colleges. Of the twenty-six English bishops, every one has on an average from 15,000*l.* to 25,000*l.* a year ; some of them 40,000*l.* ; and one or two have more. Now then mark : during sixteen years, I think it was, ending about the year 1821, a HUNDRED THOUSAND pounds a year was granted *out of the taxes* raised upon us "*for the relief of the poor clergy of the Church of England.*" Was there ever anything so monstrously impudent as this heard of in the world before ? Here were bishops with 40,000*l.* a year each, and here were poor clergy, relieved out of the taxes raised on the labouring people ! And will you send to the Parliament men who will suffer the revenues of these bishops to remain undiminished, and who will suffer the deans and chapters and the members of the colleges to be wallowing in luxury and wealth, while you yourselves are taxed to give relief to the starving working clergy ? If you do, you deserve to be taxed till you break down under the load. At any rate I can answer for myself, and I will never endure the intolerable disgrace of

being the representative of persons so lost to all sense of justice.

Gentlemen, you who live in these towns of the North, and who know comparatively but little about tithes and their pressure, may deem them a subject of much less importance than the CORN BILL ; therefore, it is my duty to show you, and in very plain language, that tithes is a subject inseparable from that of the Corn Bill. Before I do this, let me notice an argument which may be urged against my proposition, and may be fairly urged too. It is this ; that tithes, used in their present form and manner and amount, have existed ever since what is called the Reformation, which is now pretty nearly 300 years. My argument is this, that the tithes (along with the taxes) prevent the farmer from having wherewith to pay the labourers a sufficiency of wages ; and that, therefore, the tithes ought to be abolished. The argument in answer to me is this ; that the tithes, never having produced this effect before, never having rendered the farmer incapable of paying sufficient wages before, cannot have produced this effect now. This is a fair argument, and it remains wholly unanswered by those who assert that tithes are a hinderance to improvements, and that they prevent the land from being cultivated in the best manner ; because, if such be their effects now, such must always have been their effects ; and we know that such effects did not always exist. Besides, I have never heard any man, however able, who did not fail in his endeavours to show, that tithes are more a hinderance to agriculture, or injurious to the cultivator, than RENT is, in proportion to their amount. I beg, therefore, to be understood as not founding my proposition upon any such untenable ground. My proposition is founded upon the ground, that we are in a situation which compels us *to make something give way* ; that we have contracted a debt which we never can pay, and to pay the interest of which must, if we proceed on, finally plunge us into confusion. To-morrow night I am to state to you the grounds upon which I propose to sweep away the debt ; but, in that proposition is included an intention to pay a part to the fund-holders. To obtain this part, we want the proceeds of the church-property, other than the tithes ; we want also the proceeds of what is, as it were in mockery, called the crown-lands and crown-estates, the revenues of which are now frittered away, like heaps of dust, driven to and fro by the wind,

hey are lost. These items, when fully and fairly brought into account, will, I am sure, be sufficient to satisfy every just man that can be urged on the part of the fundholders. The tithes are quite another matter. By relieving the land of them, the cultivators and owners of the land will not only be enabled to pay sufficient wages to their labourers, but will be enabled to meet that only internal tax which will remain upon the country, if my proposition be adopted. The tithes are more burdensome than they formerly were, except that they are certainly exacted with greater and greater rigour; we want a tax upon the land, and no other internal tax; this tax is the simplest, the surest, the least expensive in collection, can be augmented or diminished without any trouble or embarrassment, comes from a source as sure as the sun; and the setting of the sun; but which tax we cannot collect, and cannot abolish the excise, and all the other villainous impositions, which bring swarms of taxing reptiles to torment us; we cannot get rid of this everlasting torment and vexation without a tax upon the land; that we cannot have but an abolition of the tithes; and, lastly, without that abolition, *we can never have a repeal of the Corn Bill.*

The crown-lands, as they are drollly enough called, and crown-estates, together with the Duchies of Cornwall and Lancaster, would yield several millions of pounds sterling a year. Altogether, they are immense in extent and in value. They consist of houses, lands, forests, in some places covered with timber; of mines, water-courses, and every species of property. There are some of them in all the counties of England and Wales. The kings of England formerly paid out of their estates; paid all their officers of state of every description; paid the judges, and paid all the expenses of the administration of justice; frequently carried on their wars; and, though they levied, occasionally, taxes on the owners, the poor were relieved out of the tithes, and the people at large knew nothing of an internal tax. It being troublesome to the king to have an estate to manage, those who had the making of the laws took the estate away from him, and gave him money out of the taxes to live upon, unking him to manage the estate for the benefit of the people; they have so managed it as to have the greater part of it in their own hands; first by grants, out and out, and next by leases, according to many of which they pay rents so low as to make me start with surprise at the amount. I myself rented a house belonging to the crown estate in Pall-

Mall, London, for which I gave 300*l.* a year rent. Looking into the account of the Middlesex estate, I found that my house brought the people in a clear 15*l.* a year. The Duke of Buckingham has a house in Pall-Mall belonging to the same estate, which is a perfect palace, and is worth a thousand pounds a year. The Duke of Marlborough has a house in Pall-Mall, which in the time of Queen Caroline was occupied by our great pensioner, who is now King of Belgium. It was proposed that the queen should give him 3,500*l.* a year for it. To the best of my recollection these two palaces put together do not yield the people 1000*l.* a year. Whether it be only the ground, or the ground, house, and all, I know not, but the bare ground on which these palaces and their gardens stand, is worth at least 3,000*l.* or 4,000*l.* a year; and thus it is with all the rest of this immense property. These are the effects wherewith for the nation to pay its debts, and I am satisfied that they would yield quite enough to pay to the fundholders as much as they ought to receive; and what that is I shall endeavour to show to-morrow night.

The *tithes*, as I have said before, are quite another matter; they must rest with the land, in order that the land may be able, by its own contribution, to cause the taxes in consumable commodities to be taken off. I am aware of the cry against the *Corn Bill*. I have always been an enemy of that bill. Singly, I petitioned against it when it was in the House of Lords; but, gentlemen, I beg you to be assured that no just parliament, and that no sensible man, however anxious he may be to favour manufactures, will ever attempt to cause that bill to be repealed, unless the tithes be abolished, and unless those taxes be taken off, which make it necessary to pay the labourer high wages, that he may be enabled to purchase the taxed commodities. If the *Corn Bill* were to be repealed, without a previous abolition of tithes, and of the internal taxes, especially those of malt, hops, and soap, the whole of the landlords, farmers, and agricultural labourers of England and Ireland, would be plunged into ruin; and, after all, they take more than three times as much of the productions of your looms, as all the rest of the world put together. Therefore, it is perfectly useless to petition for a repeal of the *corn-bill*, as long as these burdens remain upon the land. Join the two subjects together in your petitions; pray for the abolition of the *Corn Bill*, and of tithes and internal taxes; then all the millions of England, Scotland,

and Ireland, will cordially join you. This petitioning for a repeal of the Corn Bill, without including the tithes, has done infinite mischief: it has put a powerful argument into the mouths of the boroughmongers: there is no doubt that the election in Dorsetshire was carried in favour of a foe of the Reform Bill, merely by the enemies of the bill having been able to persuade a majority of the voters, that, if members were given to these towns in the North, they would cause a repeal of the Corn Bill, and the ruin of agriculture: You should bear in mind, that more than 300 petitions have, in the last two sessions of Parliament, prayed for the abolition of tithes, while you, in your petitions, have seldom alluded to the subject, but have never failed in your petitions to mention the Corn Bill as the greatest of grievances; while that bill, the present tithes and taxes existing, is absolutely necessary to prevent the utter ruin of those millions in England and Ireland who are your most numerous, and by far your best customers. If you permit me to offer you my advice, it is that you will never again petition for the repeal of the Corn Bill, without at the same time petitioning for the abolition of the tithes, and the great mass of internal taxation. Above all things, and not longer to put your patient attention to the test, let me beseech you, so to use the power of which I trust you will soon be possessed, as to make such a choice of representatives, as shall convince the world that you are not to be induced by any flattery, addressed to your local prejudices and passions, to pursue particular and narrow interests, in preference to the general and permanent good, greatness, and happiness, of our country.

LECTURE IV.

*29th December, 1831.***GENTLEMEN,**

I am, this evening, to submit to you the reasons on which I found my propositions with regard to the DEBT, commonly called the NATIONAL DEBT, and also with regard to an adjustment of pecuniary contracts between man and man. And here, gentlemen, I shall stand in need of all that indulgence which you have hitherto so largely bestowed upon me; for

the subject is intricate in itself, and I have to encounter all the obstacles that prejudice, bred and fostered by a long series of misrepresentations and calumnies, has placed in my way. Nevertheless, favoured by your patient and indulgent attention, I believe myself able to satisfy you, not only of the necessity, but also of the justice of the measures which I recommend, with regard to this most important branch of our national affairs. First, however, permit me to read those of my propositions which relate to it.

6. To cease, during the first six months after June, 1832, to pay interest on a fourth part of the debt; second six months, to cease to pay interest on another fourth; and so on for the other two fourths; so that no more interest, or any part of the debt, would be paid after the end of two years.
7. To divide the proceeds of all the property mentioned in paragraph No. 5, and also in paragraph No. 2, in due proportion, on principles of equity, amongst the owners of what is called *stock*, or, in other words, the *fundholders*, or persons who lent their money to those who borrowed it in virtue of acts of the late parliaments, and to give to the *fundholders*, out of the taxes, nothing beyond these proceeds.
8. To make an equitable adjustment with respect to the pecuniary contracts between man and man, and thereby rectify, as far as practicable, the wrongs and ruin inflicted on thousands upon thousands of virtuous families by the arbitrary changes made by acts of the late parliaments, in the value of the money of the country.

These propositions, or anything amounting to the same, or having the same object in view, have been called by all manner of vile names, such as are usually applied to the most flagitious acts of dishonesty. *Robbery* has never failed to be used for this purpose; and I have been frequently called a rogue, for barely mooting the proposition. This, however, has not deterred me from repeating it, as often as occasion has called for it, from the year 1803 to the present day. When I was in America the first time, I was a mere zealous prater of politics. Finding the whole of the people railing against my own country, I espoused its cause, right or wrong; and the Bank having stopped payment in 1797, I defended

bank-notes not convertible into gold, it being quite sufficient for me that England had bank-notes. But I had not been in England three years, before I clearly saw the wickedness and the mischievous tendency of the whole system of debts and paper-money. So that these are no new notions of mine, at any rate, I having continued to promulgate them for twenty-eight years, in spite of all the shafts of ridicule, and all the venom of calumny. In 1806, when the Whigs and the Grenvillites came into power, and in the bringing in of whom I had a great hand, I might have been under-secretary of state to Mr. Windham, who was then secretary of state for the colonies; but he having laughed at me, when I mentioned, as a condition, that *the interest of the debt should be reduced*, and that Freeling should not be turned out of the Post-office, I made up my mind to have nothing to do with the matter; being quite sure, as I told him, that the Ministry never could remain in power for any length of time, unless the undermining vermin of Pitt and Dundas were swept out of the offices; and that, which was still more material, shame and disgrace must finally fall upon all those who attempted to carry on the affairs of the country, loaded as it was with the National Debt; and that debt, observe, taking the difference in the value of money into consideration, was not then half so great as it is now. These opinions, then, are not new with me—taken up for this occasion, and put forth for the purpose of ingratiating myself with any part of the people, who now feel themselves pressed to the earth by that debt.

If the Reform Bill do not lighten the burdens of the people, it is agreed, on all hands, that the bill will be of no use. We all agree, except BABINGTON MACAULAY perhaps, that unless the Reform Bill lead to measures of *relief*; unless it lead to a great taking off of taxes, it will be a mere mockery of the people; and that, like *Catholic emancipation*, it will make things worse than they were before. Catholic emancipation, instead of content and tranquillity, has already been followed by *almost* a revolution in Ireland; and such will be the case with regard to reform in England, unless it be immediately followed by such a reduction of taxes as shall be sensibly felt by every part of the community, down to the very lowest of the labourers. When I come to speak of Ireland more particularly, I shall not only show that the present state of things was naturally to be expected to follow the Emancipation Bill, but that it was foreseen, and foretold by me in

most distinct terms, even while the Emancipation Bill was before the Parliament. I may now, then, be excused for presuming to predict, that the Reform Bill will be followed by similar consequences in England, unless it lead to great changes in the management of our affairs, and especially unless it lead to a great reduction of the taxes. This is natural; for the nation wants the reform, because it is over-burdened: it has great hopes and expectations from this reform; and we all know what are the invariable consequences of sanguine expectation disappointed. The labourer, who is discontented at having nothing but potatoes, when he ought to have bacon and bread, will not feel satisfied with those potatoes, upon merely being told that he has now got *reform*.

To this we come, then; without a great lightening of our burdens, the reform will be a mere mockery; a temporary delusion, and a permanent addition to the grounds of discontent. The next thing then to be considered is, how this lightening of the burdens of the people is to take place; and every one must answer, that it cannot take place at all, and that it is an abuse of words to talk of it, unless there be an alienation of the debt. When you hear men talk of retrenchment and economy, as you will hear Babington Macaulay, and others, and all the school of Brougham, and all the Whigs themselves, who are in power, and hear them at the same time declare their firm resolution not to touch the interest of the debt; declare that *national faith*, as they call it, must be kept sacred, though, by-the-by, their *national faith* means a most infamous plundering of the nation; when you hear men talk thus, set them down as hypocrites or madmen; for how is relief to come, except by a ceasing to pay interest on the debt?

Gentlemen, there are none of you, I am certain, crazy enough to suppose that the Ministers can pay this interest out of their own pockets; if you wish it to be paid, you must wish yourselves to pay it; and if you wish this, there can be no diminution of our burdens; and the state vessel must go on, blundering about among the rocks, till it goes to pieces. The case stands thus: The total clear amount of the revenue, after paying charges of collection and management, and all sorts of things, is stated by the Government to be forty-seven millions. This may be true, to be sure; but I make it a rule never to believe any of their statements or returns. It may, however, be true, and we will take them upon their own showing. The expenses of collection, together with

other innumerable charges, direct and indirect, over and above this clear revenue, would still bring the gross amount, squeezed out of the people, to sixty millions ; but, at any rate, it would bring it to fifty-six. Now, then, out of the forty-seven millions, thirty are taken for paying the dividends upon the debt, and paying the charges of all sorts relative to the debt. We must give the debt, half at least, of the expenses and charges attending the collection and management of the revenue ; and that makes its annual cost thirty-four millions and one-half. This is still far from being all that it costs ; for out of the debt grows the necessity of this thundering standing army in time of peace. The debt causes the heavy taxes ; these cause distress ; distress causes discontent ; violent discontent creates threatened commotion ; and then it becomes the duty of the Government to have a force at hand to put down commotion. To cry out, therefore, against the standing army being kept up in time of peace ; to inveigh against oppressive taxation, and to complain of distress and suffering, and *starvation* even, is to be stupidly unjust, as long as you keep up the idiot-like cry of *national faith*.

Thus much, then, for the plea of *necessity* ; and though Milton has called that the tyrant's plea, it is only the tyrant's plea when it is false. In this case it is true ; and it is, in fact, the plea of industry and want against all-devouring usury. But, now, for the *justice* of the propositions, even if we were to leave this plea of necessity out of the question, This robbery, as it is called, is really no more than imitating the practice of the wisest and most just of mankind. Many of you, gentlemen, well know, that when Solon became law-giver of Athens, he found that ancient and famous republic in a state of utter confusion and destitution ; he found it unable to make war against its enemies, unable to defend itself ; and he found besides, that all the active and industrious persons in the community were ground down into a state of beggary and ruin by the *usurers*, who had made a great part of the people in a great measure their actual slaves. Rome was in a similar state, and from a similar cause, in the time of Julius Caesar. Both of them resorted to an adjustment, which freed the people from the claws of the usurers, by making these latter in some cases take a part of their demand, and in other cases relinquish the whole. But not to mention the kings of France, who repeatedly paid off the debts of the state by lopping off, directly or indirectly, the amount of the demands of its creditors ; not to mention these, who effected their

purposes by clippings of the coins, and by other tricks, upon an equality, in point of baseness, with the tricks that have been played here to lower and to raise, and to lower and to raise again, the value of money ; not to cite the example of these *grand* and shuffling *monarques*, let us come to our brethren across the Atlantic, who, having borrowed money to an enormous extent, for the purpose of effecting that "glorious revolution" which, until it had succeeded, we used to call "a foul and unnatural rebellion ;" having borrowed of all sorts of people, of all ages and all sexes, an enormous sum of money for this holy, or, as it would have been, *unholy* purpose, and having effected that purpose, never paid one single farthing principal or interest, of the borrowed money. It would have been a jest, indeed, to have made a revolution in the name of liberty, and to have ended it by making all the people slaves to the usurers. But let us come to our own countrymen, and hear what illustrious persons amongst them have said upon the subject, and that our authorities may be as high and undoubted as possible, let us go in amongst the Ministers themselves, where, sitting with the King himself in council ; not the Birmingham council ; but the real London council ; and not the council from which Sir F. Burdett absconded ; but the real King and council, who sit at White-hall, with Bathurst for their clerk, though crammed in by the Tories, and kept in by the Whigs : let us go into that council, which my Lord Coke describes as "an honourable, noble, and *reverend*" assembly ; let us go in among these *reverend* persons, and clap our hand upon the shoulder of Sir James Graham of Netherby, a member too in another place of the " *noblest assembly of freemen in the world* ;" and let us pull out his pamphlet of 1827, and therein let us read a distinct, a most unequivocal proposition, to deduct *thirty per cent.* from the interest of the fundholders. Only one-third ; but we may ask Sir James, reverend as he is, upon what principle it is that he would take thirty per cent., other than that principle which would apply to the taking of the whole.

I have another authority to quote, which, though not of a very *reverend* character, I must confess, is pretty nearly as good as the last ; and that is Mr. BAINES's, the editor of the *Leeds Mercury* ; who, if he have not bestowed upon me every term and epithet of abuse contained in the English language, for having proposed a reduction of the interest of this debt ; if he have not done this, it has certainly been for

want of being sufficiently conversant with those terms and epithets; and, therefore, speaking conscientiously, I take the will for the deed. After all this abuse, however, this very Mr. Baines now tells us it is "still doubtful whether the middle and lower classes will not find themselves oppressed by the weight of taxation, and whether it may not ultimately be necessary that persons of property, both landowners, merchants, fundholders, and others, as well in the church as in the state, should make a general contribution, to extinguish a large portion of the National Debt; that mountain which Mr. Pitt and his followers raised to so gigantic a magnitude, and which overlays and oppresses the country." Of this scheme for lightening the burdens of the landowners, merchants, manufacturers, and others, to pay the principal instead of the *interest* of the debt, I will speak by-and-by, when I shall have to notice the observations of a literary brother of Mr. BAINES, who seems to have come to the same conclusion upon much about the same premises. But here, at any rate, we have Mr. BAINES, the great *oracle* of the North, and as famous and for the same reasons as oracles generally are; here we have this famous Mr. BAINES acknowledging that we cannot have relief, without a paying off of the debt; and observe well, proposing at the same time, to make the fundholders contribute towards paying off themselves. From this oracular suggestion let us come, if it be robbery to take the interest from the fundholders; let us not amuse ourselves with these small game, but let us come to the robbers upon a grand scale; namely, those who propose to make new emissions of paper of some sort or other. Sir Henry Parnell, and all the Scotch tribe of political economists; all the Scotch bankers, and Mr. Maberly amongst the rest, whom the Scotch have always pointed out for many years past as a profound financier: all this tribe, who propose joint-stock banking companies; and who always propose to make the paper-money a legal tender, or, whether they be divided as to this latter point or not, all propose to make prices higher than they now are, by the means of this paper. Of course, then, they propose to *lower the value of money*; of course, they propose to deduct in a base and fraudulent manner, from the interest of the debt. At any rate, they are either mad or they must intend to give the fundholder *less than he now receives*; and if they intend to give him less than he now receives, they intend, to use their own stupid phraseology, to commit a breach of national faith and to rob the fundholder.

and if they do not intend to give him less than he now receives, how can the measures which they propose lighten the burdens of the tax-payer? Supposing the act to be unjust in itself, the only difference between their proposition and mine is, that mine is taking by open and undisguised force, while theirs is theft or private stealing. Our different modes of proceeding serve to mark our different motives: mine may, at any rate, be sincere and honest; but theirs must be in its nature *furtive*. The sly manner in which they are foolish enough to believe they can effect it, would in any court of justice in the world be a proof of the furtive intention; that is to say, the thievish intention arising from a roguish mind. Mr. Attwood's scheme, which has many partisans, though paper be one of its ingredients, is open and honest; for he says, and he says truly, that owing to Peel's bill, and the various other tricks of our at once bungling and bragging Government, the fundholders, the mortgagees, and other usurers, are now receiving twice or thrice as much as they ought to receive; that they ought to be compelled by law to receive less; and a paper-money ought to be made, and they ought to be made to receive it, which paper-money would be worth a great deal less than the King's coin pound for pound. In all but the remedy I perfectly agree with Mr. Attwood, who is a man of great talent, and whose brother, the Member of the House of Commons, has shown more sense and more virtue (except in his opposition to the Reform Bill) than all the whole crew of Ministers and Ministers' underlings, who have been upon the stage during the whole of the twenty-eight years that I have been knocking their heads one against the other, and finding no sense in them, have finally been dragging them in the dirt. I differ with the Attwoods as to the remedy; because, in the first place, it would violate all recent contracts; because I know it would enable me to rob my yearly servants of one-half of their yearly wages; because I know that it would give like ability to all other employers; because I know that it would rob English, Scotch, and Irish merchants and manufacturers of half the debts due to them abroad; because I know that the mortgagee who lent his real gold upon an estate, would be paid off in paper not worth half the money, and so with regard to recent marriage settlements, rent charges, annuities, and every contract and stipulation for time; but secondly, and of more weight than all the other considerations put together, because the Attwood remedy might by some chance or other,

prolong the existence of the debt, and of that truly infernal gamble carried on in London, called the Stock Exchange ; rather than not see the destruction of which I would behold, and endure my share of any possible evil that could afflict us.

Now, then, there is no scheme for lightening the burdens of the country, which does not amount to what my opponents designate a robbery ; so that I am not singular in this respect. All agree to take away something : we only differ as to the manner of the taking. But I deny that it is robbery, in any of its shapes or forms ; I deny that the nation owes the fundholders anything at all ; I deny their claim to a single farthing from the nation ; and, when I propose to take the church-property and crown estates, for the purpose of giving the proceeds to the fundholders, it is not a proposition founded on an opinion of mine, that they have a *right to demand anything* ; but founded in the *right of the nation to dispose of certain property that it possesses, and which is now of no use to it, and which it in policy ought to bestow on that part of the fundholders, who would be totally ruined, unless this relief were afforded them ; and especially that part of them who may have been compelled, against their expressed will, to have their property deposited in the funds.* This is the principle upon which I would give the fundholders anything at all, they having, in point of right, no claim upon the nation whatsoever.

No nation, supposing the whole nation to have been the borrowers, has a right to burden its posterity. I might stop here to show, and I easily could show, that it was those, whom the present Ministers have accused of having usurped the legislative rights of the people, who borrowed the money. I might insist upon, and prove it most clearly, that it was, not *the nation* that borrowed the money ; but, grant that it was, what right had your fathers to load you with this intolerable debt ? What would be said of a law that should compel the children to pay the debts of the father, he having left them nothing wherewith to pay ? Of a law that should make the children work all the days of their lives to clear off the score, run up by a drunken and profligate father ? Of a law, which should say to the father, Spend away, run in debt, keep on borrowing, close your eyes in the midst of drunkenness and gluttony ; imitate the frequenters of Bellamy's all your life ; and your children, and children's children, shall be slaves to pay Bellamy and others with whom you have run

up the score ? Would not the makers of such a law be held in everlasting execration ?

And, in what respect does this case differ from that of a prodigal and borrowing nation. "Oh !" say the advocates of the Jews, "the difference is very great ; for the nation borrows money to defend itself against an enemy, which defence it could not effect without this borrowing of money." I might stop here, and flatly deny that one penny of this money was ever borrowed for that purpose ; for it is notorious that it was almost all borrowed for the purpose of carrying on one war to force unjust taxation on the American colonies, and another war to force back the Bourbons upon France, and thereby prevent the overthrow of borough-mongering in England. This is perfectly notorious ; but I will not disfigure my argument by any reliance upon it. Let it be admitted that the money was borrowed for the purpose of defending the country ; and then I ask, what right your fathers had to *purchase* ease and safety, and to leave you to pay the debt ? What right should we of the present day have to throw upon our children the burden of defending ourselves ? If we be in danger, we are to come forth in our persons, or by our purses, for our own defence. By the very argument of our opponents, the resources of the country are the great means, if not the only means of its security ; what right have we, then, to anticipate these resources ? What right have we to take beforehand the means of security from our children ?

Gentlemen, not another word need be said with regard to the right of mortgaging the strength of the child in the cradle ; not another word need be said about the want of the right in a nation to burden posterity, and very little is it necessary to say about the right of the lender to demand a liquidation of the burden. For, if there existed no right in the borrower to make the loan, what right can there be in the lender to demand repayment ? This latter knew who it was to whom he was lending, and he knew also the base and dishonest intentions of the borrower to throw the debt upon posterity. If in consequence of the unjust and cruel law, which I have before supposed, to make children pay the debts of the father, he leaving them nothing wherewith to pay ; if, in that case, a lender were basely to administer to the father's profligate extravagance, would not the world call him monster when he came to grind the children to death for repayment

of the loan? Yet, in what respect would he be more detestable than the atrocious Jews, whether calling themselves Christians or not, who now come and demand from us the pound of flesh in virtue of their bond? In the affairs of individuals, the law knows of no such anticipation as this. The law not only will not allow the children to be answerable for the debts of the father, but will not allow them to be answerable for their *own debts*, contracted before they arrive at the age of maturity. And why is this? They are not answerable for the debts, because the law considers them as incapable of *giving their assent* to them. How then can you be answerable for these debts, the greater part of which was contracted before scarcely ten men here assembled were twenty-one years of age?

Not one farthing, therefore, of these debts is due from you to the fundholders. The great advocate of the abominable Jews, the editor of the *Morning Chronicle*, resorts to a couple of curious arguments in defence of their claims, the first of which is this: that the nation having "*suffered*" the Government to borrow the money, or rather to make the loan (for it was not *money*); the nation having *suffered* the Government to do this, is bound to pay the debt. So that here is a Government, with an army, with all the means of compelling the nation to submit to what it pleases; to resist its will is treason; and the Jew, who comes and lends money to this Government, is to come, when the people have got the power of altering the law which enabled the Government to do this, and tell them; the blaspheming Jew is to come, and tell them that they are bound in conscience to pay back the money that he lent for the purpose of keeping them down, and to threaten to have them crucified, if they hold back a farthing of his demand. But, gentlemen, even if we were to admit this, monstrous as it is, it would not come up to the purpose of our opponents. For, if the nation ought not to have *suffered* the Government to borrow the money, and if it assumed responsibility for this loan, in consequence of suffering it to be made, it must be the nation that was *then alive*; and how are you, who were not then born, or at most were infants, to be held responsible for payment, because you did not prevent the Government from borrowing the money?

The other argument of this new disciple of the synagogue, this new child and champion of the hell called the Stock Exchange, is this: that if an invading enemy besiege a town, and demand a *ransom* to spare it from being abandoned to

the soldiery, and a sum of money be borrowed to pay the ransom, and thus save the town, the people of the town are bound all to contribute according to their means to repay the money thus borrowed. Certainly, Rabbi, nothing more just, but, then, it is the people *then alive*, that are to repay the ransom ; and this is precisely my argument, not only did no man living ever hear of the repayment of such a ransom being thrown upon the posterity of a town, but the thing cannot be, for mankind have never yet heard of a law to tax people for such repayment ; and if such law were to be passed, if any lawgivers of a town were equally foolish with the lawgivers of this nation, the people would avoid the tax by abandoning the town, as they are now abandoning England to the amount of *ten millions a year* of rents and income, in order to avoid paying their share of this unjust burden called the debt. And this is one great evil of the thing. All the world acknowledges what dreadful evils have fallen upon Ireland in consequence of the absentees not expending their revenues in the country. How many projects have we heard, and sometimes even in Parliament, for taxing the property of absentees at a higher rate than that of other people ! Base indeed it is, that those who live on the taxes, and particularly those who live on the tithes, shameful it is in them to carry their revenues out of the country. Sorrowful it is to see men going off with their wealth to the United States of America ; but, while in the former instance there are no means of prevention, in the latter instance there is neither prevention nor ground of blame. Men flee from unjust pressure ; they flee from a law that compels them to pay the debts of their fathers ; and flee they will, as long as that law shall exist. I am, therefore, for putting an end for ever to this unjust law, and for the doing of which I have, I think, produced much more than argument sufficient. But I must not dismiss the subject without asking a little, what after all, would *really be due* to these fundholders if we were for argument's sake to admit that they had a claim to anything at all ? The sum is stated in its most modest amount, at eight hundred millions. It would not be right to have an appearance of boldness in addressing persons who are worth eight hundred millions of money, but one might just ask them WHERE THEY GOT THE MONEY ? Where did you get it, gentlemen and ladies ? There are a good many of you, to be sure, but you have lent more money here than there now is, or ever was in the whole world, more pounds of gold

and silver than ever came out of the mines. It amounts to more than the whole of the kingdom, lands, houses, mines, and woods, would sell for, if put up to auction, and if foreigners could bring gold and silver into the country, and purchase them. There must be some great mistake then. It is physically impossible that you can have lent this money.

Gentlemen, it has all been a jugglery from the beginning to the end. A loan-monger, or the maker of a loan, has never lent any money at all. He has written his name upon bits of paper; these he has distributed about in sales to under loan-mongers; these have been turned into other bits of paper; and these bits of paper the Government have paid away. I cannot adopt a better mode of explaining this matter than by describing to you a transaction by the means of which I was once likely to become a loan-monger myself, and which first opened my eyes with regard to this matter. When I came home from America, in the year 1800, I was looked upon by the Government people as likely to become one of their vigorous partisans. It was the custom in those glorious times of Pitt and paper, to give to the literary partisans of the Government what were called "slices" of a loan. For instance, Moses was the loan-monger; and, as the *scrip*, as it used to be called, was always directly at a *premium*, a bargain was always made with the loan-monger that he should admit certain favourites of the Government to have certain portions of *scrip*, at the same price that he gave for it; I was offered such portion of *scrip*, which, as I was told, would put a hundred pounds or two into my pocket at once. I was frightened at the idea of becoming responsible for the immense sum, upon which this would be the profit. But I soon found that the *scrip* was never even to be shown to me, and that I had merely to pocket the amount of the *premium*. I positively refused to have anything to do with the matter, for which I got heartily laughed at. But this was of great utility to me; it opened my eyes with regard to the nature of these transactions; it set me to work to understand all about the debt and the funds and the *scrip* and the stock and everything belonging to it. At every step I found the thing more and more black, and more and more execrable; and it soon brought my mind to a conclusion, that the system was what *the accursed thing* was in the camp of the Israelites, and that the nation never could be happy again until it was got rid of; in which opinion I have remained from that day to this.

Now, if I had pocketed this money, it must have come out of the estates, skill, and labour, of the people. I should have been a robber indeed ; this would have been real robbery, and a great deal more worthy of the gallows than the forging of a bank-note, or the stealing of a sheep. From this, gentlemen, you may judge what loan-making was. If I did not get the hundred pounds or two, somebody else did ; and we have had to pay interest, and compound interest upon it, from that day to this. I should have thus taken from the nation enough to support four or five labourers and their families, for one year at any rate ; and, if I had taken it, and had bought stock with it, as it is called, would it not have been right to pay me with a halter, instead of paying me in money ? If certain proprietors of newspapers, whom I could name, were brought to a strict account, what, good God ! are the sums which they have got in this way ! How soon they would come tumbling from their chariots, and lie by the wayside, food for kites and carrion-crows, unless, out of pure benevolence, taken up by the grave-robbers and Burk-ers ; and carried "for the benefit of science," to the humane Mr. Warburton's schools of anatomy !

Well, then, wholly unable to account, upon principles of either natural philosophy or arithmetic, how these gentlemen and ladies came by the 800 millions to lend to the nation, let us leave that, as a matter for posterity to handle, we ourselves taking care to leave them nothing else belonging to the debt, and let us now proceed to inquire what, even according to their own showing, is really due to these "public creditors," as they impudently call themselves. The far greater part of the money, *if it were* money, was borrowed (if a transaction such as I have just described can be called borrowing) when, according to the showing of the Parliament itself, a pound of the currency was not worth more than fourteen shillings of the present money. This was the statement of the bullion report of 1810. VANSITTART made the house negative the fact ; but the fact was revised and ratified in 1819 by that very same house. So that, upon their own showing, we are paying interest upon a pound, instead of interest upon fourteen shillings. That, however, is not the true view of the matter. The bullion committee took a wrong standard or criterion. The true standard was the bushel of wheat ; and it is perfectly notorious that the average price of that article, during the time that the loans were making, was more than double what it has been, on an average, during the last sixteen or seventeen years. So that,

at the very least, we are paying in interest double the sum that we ought to pay. The debt, if debt it ought to be called, was contracted in depreciated money; and we are compelled to pay in money of full value. This has been effected too by acts of that Parliament whose business it was to take care of our interests; and now, when we demand that this grievous wrong should be put an end to, we are accused of wishing for a breach of the national faith. *Faith* in such a case means *honest dealing*; and has not faith been due to the nation? Are the Jews the only people in the world towards whom there is to be honesty of dealing? During the time that the chief part of the money was lent, the price of wheat was, on an average, fifteen shillings the bushel; the ruinous bill of PEEL brought it down, at one time, to four shillings the bushel. Thus were all the rest of the nation robbed for the benefit of a band of Jews and jobbers; thus were the resources of the country poured into their laps, that they might lend them again to Spaniards, Portuguese, South Americans, Austrians, Prussians, and Russians. In short, the whole thing seems to have been invented for the purpose of reducing the people of this kingdom to beggary.

It has been surprising to every one who has paid attention to the matter, that the present Ministers tolerate in PEEL the audacity which they do tolerate. What! is the possession of a million or two of money, to make it safe for him to stand up and talk in the tone of a Solon, while every tongue ought to exclaim, "Is this man not to be brought to account for the destructive bill of which he was the author; are those really representatives of the people, who can sit and hear him opposing a reform of that Parliament which sanctioned his destructive bill?" Is it possible that men can sit and hear this language from him and not remind him that he has done more mischief to his country than ever was inflicted upon it by any other man for a thousand years past? Is it possible that the people can deem those their representatives, who have not the spirit, or who want the understanding, to place in a proper light the conduct of this man?

Let us now look a little into another matter connected with this debt. We have seen that it has no valid foundation as a charge against the present nation: we have seen that it is not our debt at all; and if it were, we have seen that we are paying more than double the amount of interest due. Mr. Mushett, of the Mint, a great stickler for the fundholders,

at the close of his voluminous calculations, admitted that the fundholders had sometimes lost and sometimes gained by the changes in the value of money ; but that, up to the year 1820, they and the nation were *even* ; so that, according to this decision of their advocate, we have been now for eleven years paying them two for one ; so that, upon this view of the matter, we might now be free from all interest for *eleven years* at any rate ; and, at the end of the eleven years, the nation might, *if it chose*, begin to pay interest again. However, I deny the claim altogether ; and to strengthen, if anything were necessary to strengthen, my argument in support of this denial, let us look at the *security*, which the lenders took when they lent the money ; for, observe, this is a very material consideration, and will be found to involve results of the greatest importance.

When a man lends money, he knows, or ought to know, the sufficiency of the borrower. He ought to know what security he has. In the case of a mortgage, rent-charge, annuity, he has the land or house as security. In the case of money lent on bond, in other manner, he has the goods and chattels, and, after all, the person of the party ; but what security did these loanmongers take ? It is the common talk with them, that they have a mortgage upon all the lands and houses and other real property in the kingdom. Let them, then, produce the deed and the bond. They can do no such thing. They have no deed and no bond, and they have no mortgage upon anything. Their security consists solely of an act of Parliament, or acts of Parliament, which are properly called *loan-acts* ; and a loan act is of this nature. The Government contracts a loan with a loanmonger ; and an act of Parliament is passed, to provide that the interest of the loan shall be regularly paid, without any deduction, out of the proceeds of the *consolidated fund*. Now, then, what is this fund ? The fundholders, and particularly the ladies, have an idea, natural enough, that this fund consists of a monstrous heap of gold and silver money, kept somewhere or other, under the guard and protection of the Government or the bank. I beg leave to assure the ladies that there is not any such heap of money, or any heap at all, or any chest, or box, or receptacle for the gold and silver ; but that the *consolidated fund* means the clear proceeds of the taxes that the Ministers are able annually to squeeze out of us : that these taxes are paid into the bank when collected ; that out of them the bank pays the interest to the fundholders half-yearly ; and

hat, if the taxes in the hands of the bank be not sufficient to pay the half-yearly interest, which is frequently the case, the bank *lends the Government enough to make up the deficiency*; that is to say, makes some of its bank-notes, and lends them to the Government; and for the bank-notes thus lent, *we have to pay the interest*. Now, gentlemen, did the world ever hear of such a thing as this before?

However, here we have a clear idea of the nature of the security; and a very consolatory appearance it has to the ladies who do us the honour to lend us money; for, though it does not actually come up to the beautiful scriptural idea of the "*munition of rocks*," it at any rate takes a very wide spread; and really is good as long as the loan acts shall continue in full force. *Consolidated fund* is a very imposing phrase; but still it consists only of words, and conveys no idea of anything fixed to the earth; in short, a loan-bill is the fundholder's contract; it gives him a claim upon the taxes annually collected; it gives him no other claim, and if the taxes be not collected, he has no claim at all; which brings us directly to a very important matter closely connected with the subject of parliamentary reform; seeing that every man in his senses deems the reform to be of no use at all unless it produce a great diminution of the taxes, which, in other words, seems, at the very least, a great diminution of the security of the fundholder. And yet, is any one of you, gentlemen, prepared to say that no taxes ought to be taken off; and are you prepared to say that the Corn-bill ought to continue in order to prevent this security from being diminished?

When the bank stopped payment in gold in 1797, one of the arguments urged against the measure, or rather one of the complaints against Pitt, for having reduced the bank to the necessity of stopping, was this; that amongst other things, it would be a *fraud* upon the fundholders, a *robbery* of the fundholders, because it put forth a depreciated and compulsory paper instead of the King's coin, and thereby did, in fact, violate all the loan-bills by compelling the fundholders to take less than the loan-bills had stipulated for. The answer of Pitt was, that it was a case of *necessity*, and that it was the duty of the Government to preserve the country even if it did cause some loss to the fundholders. Pushed hard on the other side, the then Solicitor-General, Sir John Mitford, since Lord Redesdale, rose, and, as a lawyer, said that there was no wrong done to the fundholder; that he lent his

money with the knowledge of the *risk* that he ran ; that he received an interest *proportioned to the risk* ; that the nation was not bound to secure him against all risk ; that many persons in the kingdom had a claim *prior* to that of the fund-holder ; that the soldier and the sailor had a *prior* claim ; and he asked if any one would assert that the King himself had not a *prior* claim. There was no answer to this argument *then* ; and who is to find an answer to it now ? And is it not as clearly a case of necessity *now* as it was *then* ?

Thus, then, we see that the interest can be lowered, and that the whole can be withheld without any real violation of the contract. But to come closer to our own affair ; if we cannot withhold the interest without breach of national faith, how can we without breach of that faith diminish the security for paying it ? We have seen that the source of payment is the annual produce of what is called the consolidated fund, and that means the taxes ; and has not the security been diminished then by the repeal of the salt tax, the beer tax, the candle tax, and the numerous customs and taxes, which have been recently taken off ? Has not the security been diminished by reducing the proceeds of the consolidated fund from a clear fifty-four millions a year to a clear forty-seven millions a year ?* And will the security not be further reduced, when the *malt tax* shall be taken off ? And do you, gentlemen, imagine that the malt tax can remain on many months after a reformed Parliament shall assemble ? I am aware that you in the north here are not fond of ale, particularly if it be strong, and require much malt in the making ; but after long and attentive observation, I can most positively

* We learn from the newspapers published since this lecture was delivered, that this *consolidated fund*, if we believe the Government statements, has fallen down to forty-two millions a year. I repeat, that I never place faith in any of these statements of the Government, having so many times proved them to be false ; but there must be something in this new story ; and I shall be very glad to find that this is a true account ; having always regarded that argument which deduces a proof of the prosperity of the country from the great amount of money squeezed from it by the tax-gatherer, as the most stupid effusion of human folly and impudence. If this account be true, it shows that we are got to the end of the tether ; that taxation has run its race, and that a new sort of career must be adopted. I am disposed to believe, however, that this is the case ; namely, that Lord Grey has not found himself capable to adopt the tricks so long in practice at the treasury ; that we have now a true account ; and that the truth would have been kept from our sight, if the old stagers had still been at the treasury.

assure you that the thing is quite otherwise in the south, and the west, and the east; and that the very first thing that the hopsticks expect, as the consequence of a reform of the parliament, is a repeal of that tax, which, taking the necessary monopoly into view, makes ale five-pence or six-pence a pot, where it would not be more than one penny or three halfpence. Without a repeal of this tax, as one of its first consequences, the Reform Bill is not worth a straw; and if it be repealed, mark well what it does: the tax itself, including that on the hops, which must be repealed also, amounts annually to about four millions and a half. But, observe, this is a small part of what it does in the way of injury to the people. Barley is at this time about 4s. a bushel, or, rather less. A bushel of barley makes a bushel of malt, and the increase pays for the malting, and if there were no tax, gentlemen as well as farmers, all over the country, would make the malt themselves; and then, all things considered, the malt would not on an average cost them more than 3s. a bushel at this time; because all the marketing expenses would be saved, and because unmarketable barley would frequently be turned into malt. Formerly, in every considerable parish, there was a malt-house attached to the parsonage, and the priest was maltster for the poor, as well as guardian of their souls; but this was in the dark ages; and we who now live in the light cannot expect to enjoy this adventitious benefit of darkness. But, at any rate, if the malt tax were repealed, we should now have malt at 3s. a bushel. The tax is 2s. 6d. on the bushel of malt, upon the increase as well as upon the barley, so that this brings the malt (the barley being 4s. a bushel) to 6s. 6d. a bushel; but I pay at this time 9s. 6d. for a bushel of malt! The maltster charges the 3s. a bushel, besides the increase, in virtue of the monopoly which the tax gives him. He is obliged to have a large building; he is obliged to submit to a restriction and superintendence extremely injurious to his business; he is compelled to have a large capital to make advances in the payment of the tax, in order that he may have a stock of malt by him, being compelled to make in winter that which is used in summer, the summer not being a season for the making of malt; he is compelled to submit to regulations, which frequently cause him losses that take away a great part of his profits; and he is continually exposed to the risk of severe punishment for deviating in the smallest degree from these minute and vexatious regulations; so that this

trade, which rarely ought to exist at all, is far from being a trade of profit ; and the result is, that I now pay *nine shillings and sixpence* for a bushel of malt, instead of the *three shillings and sixpence* which I should pay if there were no tax upon it. The moral effects are still more injurious. The working people are driven from their own houses to the ale-house. And as “evil communications corrupt good manners,” these are become, not places for taking refreshment, but scenes of drunkenness and of profligacy of every description : and all this the landowners of England have been base enough to suffer, at the same time that they have been incessantly hardening the laws wherever they bear upon the working people.

And shall not this enormous evil be removed ? Will you so use your franchise as to send men to Parliament to support this curse of the country ? Will you send men thither to prohibit the farmer and his men from turning into drink the produce of their fields ? If you will, a Reform of the Parliament will be a source of shame instead of triumph to you. Much better remain as you are, in quiet submission to this tax, instead of sharing in the disgrace of upholding it. Yet if this tax be taken off, what becomes of the security for paying the interest of the debt ? The tax on malt and hops may, as I said before, be four millions and a half a year ; but, mark well, the repeal of the malt and hop tax will virtually repeal nine-tenths of the spirit tax ; also nine-tenths of the tea and the coffee tax ; a large part of the sugar tax ; for it is against all reason to believe that the tea and coffee slops will remain in vogue amongst the millions of working people, when they can have a pot of good ale for a penny or three halfpence. A very great part of the wine tax would come off too ; for, once at liberty to use the produce of our own fields, very little wine would be consumed by persons in the middle rank of life ; nine-tenths of the wine not being either so good or so palatable as drink that can be made out of our own barley and our own hops. Sixteen good round millions would come off by this repeal of the malt tax. But what would then become of the securities for the interest of the debt ? And yet will you send men to Parliament who shall vote for the continuance of this tax, with all its disgraceful evils ; with all the sufferings that it entails upon the millions ; will you send men to vote for the continuance of this tax, lest the repeal of it should destroy the means of the payment of the interest of the fundholder ? One more question : will you

and men to vote against the repeal of the corn bill ? Yes, you will, if you send men not to vote for a repeal of the malt tax ; for, think what you may of the matter, the Corn Bill can either be repealed nor mitigated as long as the tax on malt and hops shall continue ; and of this I beg you to be assured.

It requires but very little profundity to perceive the vast advantages that the manufacturers would derive from a repeal of these abominable taxes. The manufacturers are, at the very outside, not more than two millions out of the seventeen or eighteen millions of the people of this kingdom. The rest, after deducting a couple of millions more for the sea-port towns, and the food-consumers of the monstrous men, are persons employed in agriculture, or in trades or occupations subservient to the purposes of agriculture. These millions, who must be your very best customers, first seek their food, next their drink ; next, their clothing and their bedding. Take, then, threepence a pot from the cost of their drink, take away that which is now *wasted* on the foreign articles of tea, coffee, sugar, and wine, and what will become of the savings ? Do you think they will fling the savings into the sea ? not they indeed. The wife and daughters will take care that a part of these savings, and a pretty good part too, shall go to the cotton and the riband-shop ; and the men will, once more, get coats upon their backs ; for be you assured that not one penny of the money will be buried in the garden, or under a stone in the cellar. So that you are much more deeply interested in the repeal of the malt and the hop-tax than you are in the repeal of the Corn Bill, even if that could possibly be accomplished, which it cannot without a repeal of these taxes.

Well, then, to this point we come at last : even admitting the debt to be a valid debt, which I do not ; even admitting that the last generation had a right to burden this, which I deny, as being a thing abhorrent to every principle of reason and of justice, to this point we come ; that the Reform Bill is to produce no effect good to the people, and the working-people especially, unless the security for the payment of the interest of the debt be taken away. Will any one pretend to deny that the Parliament had a right to repeal the tax on salt, the tax on candles, the tax on beer ? Then how can any one pretend to deny its right to repeal the tax upon malt and upon hops ? Of what use, then, can this reform of the Parliament be, unless we acknowledge the right of a reformed Parliament to repeal taxes ; and if we do allow this right, on

what foundation stands the interest of the debt, other than that of expediency and convenience, respecting the power and disposition of the nation to pay? Some years ago, Alexander Baring, the great loan-monger, said that "*the nation was bound to pay, as long as it had anything to pay with.*" This loan-monger chose to place the nation upon the footing of an individual in common life; and insisted that, like the bankrupt, it was under an obligation to surrender all it had. The bankrupt is bound to surrender all the worldly goods that he has then in his possession; but the bankrupt *himself* has been the borrower, or has become the debtor, from some cause or other; it is for his *own use* that he has contracted the debt, and not for the use of his successors. He surrenders *his* all; but he does not extend the surrender to his children. Besides this, the bankrupt is not stripped of the clothes that cover his body; the tools necessary to earn his bread are left him; an act of bankruptcy or insolvency clears him of the past; his creditors cannot deprive him of the use of his limbs, and of his means of making future provision for his wants and his safety. But these inexorable creditors of ours would make us, and even the child in the cradle, slaves to them; would leave us no part of our future earnings; would take all from us except our bare lives; would leave us none of the means of providing either for the safety, or for the upholding of the honour of our country; would make the country submit to invasion, conquest, and everlasting servitude, rather than give up their claim upon the resources of the country! If there be anything so audacious as this; if any pretension equal to this in cruelty, as well as presumption and profigate defiance of the moral sense of mankind, I should be glad to have pointed out to me where I am to find it ever was heard of.

Thus, then, in every possible view that can be taken of the matter, it appears to me clear as day-light, that the people of these northern towns will be guilty of a scandalous breach of duty if they send to Parliament any man not pledged on the conditions which I have before stated; namely, on the conditions stated last evening of payment to the fundholders, to the extent of the amount of the property which the nation has at its disposal; guilty I say of a scandalous abandonment of duty, if they fail to send to the Parliament men pledged to free the nation from this intolerable load.

It now remains for me to offer, with your permission, the

Observations called for in explanation of the eighth proposition ; namely, an *equitable adjustment*, with respect to the pecuniary contracts between man and man ; and to rectify, as far as practicable, the wrongs and ruin inflicted on many thousands by the arbitrary changes in the value of money, which changes were made by acts of the unreformed Parliament ; to extend this adjustment to every transaction between man and man ; as, without this adjustment, even the abolition of the claim of the fundholders would be of no avail, and even injurious in numerous and most important cases of money lent and money borrowed. In numerous cases of mortgage, marriage-settlement, rent-charge, and annuity, growing out of real property, estates have either been taken away or almost taken away ; not by any indiscretion, not by any extravagance, not by any fault of any kind in those who ought to be the owners of the property. The wills of the deceased have been violated ; the prospects and the just expectations and reliances of numerous most virtuous and industrious people, have been blasted in an infinite number of cases ; those who might be still opulent, are in a state of beggary ; and all these grievances have been caused by Acts of the Parliament in changing the value of the money of the country, which acts have been as completely acts of *confiscation* as if they had borne that title, and as if the preambles of them had set forth that it was *expedient* to violate the contracts of the living and the wills of the dead, to blast all the efforts of industry, and all the hopes of virtue ; to render human affairs throughout the whole kingdom as uncertain as the movement of the winds and the waves : if the preambles of the acts had set this forth as the ground of the acts, the effects could not have been other than they have been. For what will a reformed Parliament assemble then ? What will it be worth, unless it be able to do something in the way of rectifying these enormous wrongs ; the main tendency of which has been to deliver over the possessions of the legitimate owners and the earnings of industry to the hands of usury. In thousands upon thousands of cases, skilful, upright, and most industrious merchants, traders, and manufacturers, have been utterly ruined by these arbitrary acts of this Parliament, every one of which tended to the swelling of the wealth of the usurers, and to the crushing of industry and virtue. A reformed Parliament may, and I trust will, reach the principal actors in these works of ruin ; but, not even a reformed Parliament, nor all the wit of man can discover the means of affording anything

approaching to redress in those numerous instances where ruin has thus been inflicted on families engaged in commercial pursuits. But where the property is of an immoveable nature, where the deeds and records can be referred to for proof, where the parties are alive, or where there are successors entitled to redress, or sufficient to answer ; in all these cases, justice may yet be done ; and, if justice be not done, the reformed Parliament will, after all, be a just object of the scorn of mankind.

Oh ! the *difficulty*—the impossibility to make such an inquiry into the mortgages, settlements, and the rest ! It could never be done ! Not done, gentlemen ? This same Government and Parliament, though they enacted Peel's Bill, and the panic-bill ; though they have done all this mischief, bunglers as they have been in these matters, unhesitatingly as they have lashed their destructive tail amongst the shoals of the community, and with as little mercy as the whale lashes its destructive fins amongst the shoals of the sea ; careless as they have been here, and incompetent to every purpose of good, they have been very efficient as to other purposes ; and, from their proceedings with regard to them, we must not decline to take a profitable example. They found no difficulty, when they had an income or property-tax to collect ; they found no difficulty then, in looking into every man's rent-roll, and every man's lease, they found no difficulty in ascertaining the amount of the profits of every man's trade, no difficulty in ascertaining the number of his children, and in prescribing to him the extent of his annual expenditure ; no difficulty do they still find in ascertaining the number of our windows, dogs, horses, carriages, and servants ; no difficulty in ascertaining whether we be bachelors or married men ; not the smallest difficulty in ascertaining whether we or our families or inmates, put powder into our hair, or leave it unpowdered ; no difficulty do they find, in coming at the curious fact of whether we put arms upon the seals that hang from our watches, or upon the spoons with which we eat our broth ; they find not the smallest difficulty in ascertaining whether our canine property consist of greyhounds, hounds, spaniels, pointers, setters, lurchers, mastiffs, or lap-dogs : not the smallest difficulty, again, do they find in ascertaining the number of sheets of paper and print which a pamphlet ought to contain, and even the number of square inches in each sheet, in order to prevent such pamphlet from having a *seditious or blasphemous* tendency.

What, gentlemen ! and cannot such clever men as these

discover the means of finding out whether the reputed owner of a piece of real property, is now held to pay, or has been held to pay, more than is, or has been, due to the lender of the money upon that property, whether in the way of mortgage, or in any other way? If they cannot discover this, a reformed Parliament would, or that Parliament would immediately demand further reforming; for, a body of legislators, who could not do that which was so easily done by Solon and by Cæsar, so far from meriting our respect, would deserve to be trampled under foot.

Here, again, the Corn Bill stares us in the face. Nine-tenths of the houses and lands of England are mortgaged, and otherwise charged for more than one-half of their worth. To a certain extent the real property of every country always was, and always must be, thus pledged. It is one of the great uses of real property, that it can be made available in this way; but there is a limit, beyond which this species of pledging becomes destructive of the happiness and even of the peace of a country: and this limit we have long passed. In fact, the usurers, who are also the principal owners of the debt, have in the first place drawn up the resources of the country in taxes; and then they have expended the taxes thus received by them in lending them upon the houses and land; and thus become, in great part, the real owners of the whole kingdom. Amongst other things, they have become proprietors of boroughs and the makers of laws; and this is the true and only reason why that great source of confiscation has not long ago been swept away. With respect to the *practicability* of making this adjustment, nothing in my mind, that is to say, nothing of considerable magnitude; nothing which has usually been thought to demand the knowledge and talent of a statesman, could be more easy. An act of Parliament, distinctly laying down the *principle* of the adjustment; distinctly providing for the rate of reduction in each year, for forty years past, distinctly laying down the rules by which the commissioners should be bound to decide; such an act, sending three commissioners into each county of the kingdom, and these might be members of Parliament themselves, would settle the whole affair in a month. For, observe, the act would leave the parties to make the settlement themselves if they chose; if they agreed to the settlement, the agreement would be merely ratified, and rendered legally binding by the commissioners. Not one case out of one hundred

would be left to be decided by the commissioners, the act being so plain as to the principle and the rule.

If this be not done, even the annihilation of the debt would be an injury to innumerable persons, to a very considerable part of those who are, or ought to be, the possessors of the buildings and the land. First, the debt ought to be swept away, and the other measures adopted which I have submitted to you in these propositions. Then the real value of money, compared with the value of the money in any former year, would be at once and exactly ascertained: and upon the standard thus furnished, the adjustment would be made. Now, gentlemen, unless this be done, the affairs of the nation can never be set to rights; here are grievous wrongs to redress, and if the redress be not afforded by a reformed Parliament, that Parliament will be with me no more an object of respect than are the guttlers and boozers of Bellamy's.

Before I conclude, I cannot help making to you, gentlemen, an observation or two on the illustration which France now affords us with regard to the workings of that abominable thing called the *national debt*. The public papers inform us that the people of Grenoble, which is a large city in the south-west of France, recently rose to impede the operations of the tax-gatherers; that the tax-gatherers called out the National Guard; that the National Guard consisted of 6,400 men; that only *four hundred* would obey the call of the tax-gatherers; and the probability is, that these *four hundred* were receiving out of the taxes more than they paid; that the tax-gatherers seeing themselves without support, scratched the names of nearly *three thousand* persons out of the tax-book, thereby intimating that these *three thousand* persons should not be called upon to pay the taxes put against their names; that this, however, did not satisfy the people, who insisted upon *burning the book itself*, and who actually burnt it amidst shouts of triumph.

Such are the natural consequences of national debts. Our profound Government thought it had achieved a great object, when, by the means of our debt, it had compelled the French people to submit to debt; thinking that that debt would keep the French people quiet. It answered this purpose for a while; but that debt, which, in the course of only sixteen years of Bourbon sway, has been pushed up to *thirteen millions of pounds sterling* of annual interest, has already produced the driving out of one king; and, if that fund-loving

gentleman, LOUIS-PHILIPPE, persist in upholding the debt of France, the consequence to him is by no means difficult to be foreseen. It was the Breton association against the paying of taxes which produced in Charles X. a project for stifling the press of France; because it became evident, that, if that press were left free, the Breton association would speedily be extended all over the kingdom; to give effect to his project, he brought troops into Paris; the people defeated the troops; and CHARLES X. was expelled. To have made the throne of his successor stable, the debt should have been expelled too. That remaining, the people exclaim, "What have we gained by the revolution other than a mere *change of names?*" And, if our debt and taxes remain after the reform shall have taken place, will not the people of England exclaim, "What have we *gained* more than the mere *name of reform?*"

There has been a proposition made, in several of the great parishes of London, to refuse to pay the direct taxes, unless the Reform Bill pass. The same proposition has been made in several parts of the kingdom; but what sense is there in this, unless the parties expect, that the Reform Bill is to produce a diminution at least of taxation? What sense is there in it, if this be not their expectation? This being their expectation, the proposition has clear reason on its side; but again, how is the diminution of taxes to take place, if the great burden of all, and the real cause of the greater part of the rest, remain unabolished? There is no sense in the proposition, unless this expectation be confidently entertained; nor is there any sense in wishing for the Reform Bill to pass.

I have now, gentlemen, offered my opinions with regard to this important matter, and have endeavoured to maintain the correctness of those opinions by arguments which I deem satisfactory. It is not for me dogmatically to assert, that all, who do not agree with me, must be in the wrong; but sincerity calls upon me, openly and clearly to state my opinions to you, and, here, again, to declare my determination not to be the representative of any body of persons, however great might be the honour of being the object of their choice, unless they unequivocally pledge themselves to support me to the utmost in giving effect to measures consonant with these my opinions.

LECTURE V.

30th December, 1831.

GENTLEMEN,

I AM this evening to address you on the remaining propositions, all but the last. That is to say, in all the propositions from 9 to 13 inclusive, which I will first read to you, lest there should be some gentlemen now present who were not here the first evening.

9. To abolish *all internal taxes* (except on the land), whether direct or indirect, including stamp-taxes of every description ; and to impose such a postage-charge for letters as to defray the *real expenses* of an economical and yet efficient post-office establishment, and no more ; so that the postage would be merely a *payment* for the conveyance of letters, and not a *tax*.
10. To lay just as much custom-house duty on importations as shall be found conducive to the benefit of the navigation, commerce, and manufactures of the kingdom, viewed as a whole, and not to lay on one penny more.
11. To make effectual provision, in every department, for the maintenance of a powerful navy ; to give such pay and such an allotment of prize-money to the seaman as to render impressment wholly unnecessary ; to abolish the odious innovation of *naval academies*, and re-open the door of promotion to skill and valour, whether found in the heirs of nobles, or in the sons of the loom or of the plough ; to abolish all military *Orders*, and to place the navy next in honour to the throne itself.
12. To make a legal, a *fixed*, and a generous allowance to the King, and, through him, to all the branches and members of his family ; to leave to him the unshackled freedom of appointing all his servants, whether of his household or of his public ministry ; to leave to him the full control over his palaces, gardens, and parks, as landowners have over their estates ; to take care that he be not worried with in-

trigues to purloin fram him that which the people give him for his own enjoyment ; so that he may be, in all respects, what the chief of a free people ought to be, his name held in the highest honour, and his person held sacred, as the great guardian of the people's rights.

13. To make an accurate valuation of all the houses, lands, mines, and other real property, in each county in the whole kingdom ; to impose a tax upon that property, to be paid quarterly, and in every county, on the same day, and in such manner as to cost in the collection, or, rather, payment, not more than *four hundred pounds* a year in any one county ; to make the rate and amount of this tax vary with the wants of the state, always taking care to be amply provided with means in case of war, when war shall be demanded by the safety, the interest, or the honour of the kingdom.

The first of these propositions recommends a repeal of all the internal taxes, except the land tax ; that is to say, all the taxes, with this single exception, other than the taxes imposed at the custom-house. There must be a charge for the carriage of letters ; because that is not a tax, but merely a payment for service rendered ; and this payment ought to be enforced by law, as it is in America ; else there could be no responsible officers to conduct the business. At this time, this is a very heavy tax, and a most unjust and partial tax ; because the aristocracy bear hardly any part of it ; because even the soldiers are excused from this tax, while the rest of the people pay for it five times as much for the carriage of their letters, as is necessary to cause that carriage to take place. It is one of the ways indeed in which the people are stripped of their earnings.

My reasons for recommending a permanent tax on the land I shall fully state by-and-by. I now proceed to the other internal taxes, except the malt and hops ; namely, the taxes of excise, of stamps, the assessed taxes ; the taxes laid on under the name of licenses ; and, in short, every tax of every description (the county and parochial rates not being included of course), except the tax on land and the custom-house duties and charges, of which I shall speak hereafter. What a blessing it would be to be relieved not only from the burden, but from the everlasting torment of these taxes, we

all know but too well. In estimating the weight of the burden, we must by no means, however, overlook two very great things; first, the collecting and managing of these taxes, which, all taken together, amount to little short of eight or nine millions a year, if we include the retired allowances to the discharged officers and clerks; also the surcharges, the fines, the loss of time in dancing attendance upon the tax-gatherers, the losses arising from the seizure and forcible sale of goods; from the costs of lawsuits in the exchequer, and various other sources of injury, and of ruin arising from these internal taxes; which cost, taking them altogether, forms about a seventh part of the whole of that enormous burden under which the nation is now sinking, and, in order to be relieved from which, it is calling so loudly for a reform of the Parliament.

The other item, which we must not forget, consists of the *monopolies*, which are created entirely by the taxes. I have mentioned fully, in the former lecture, the injury which the people experience from the monopoly arising out of the malt tax. The monopoly arising out of the hop tax is a still more cruel monopoly, and more repugnant to every sense of justice, because it not only throws the growing of hops into comparatively few hands, and thereby greatly enhances the price to the consumer, but it intercepts that which nature would give us for nothing. In innumerable cases all over England, hops grow up naturally in the hedges, poles stuck into the hedges for the hops to run up would give you a crop, without any other labour than that of gathering the hops and drying them; but you dare not gather them and dry them, even for your own use, without making an entry beforehand at the Excise Office, and without going to give notice when you are going to gather them; then waiting till an exciseman comes to see the place where you dry them; and then not to put them by for use until he has weighed them and assessed you to the duty upon them. In short, in this law, the Government forbids you to take that which God gives you for nothing. Were it not for this law, every poor man would have a few plants of hops in his garden enough for his use; but this law comes and says he shall not have them, because it is not worth while to go to the Excise Office and enter the ground, and to put yourself under the claws of an exciseman for a matter so small in amount, besides the danger of exposing yourself to penalties and improbable imprisonment, and without limit of time too, for the neglect of some

precaution, the non-observance of some petty regulation, adopted by these tormenters of the people.

Let me stop here to observe on the punishments inflicted for breaches of the taxing laws. If you thus incur a debt, as they call it, to the Government; in the first place, no property that you possess is protected against the claim. The process against you is the most swift and most severe. It spares you in no respect whatsoever. If wholly unable to satisfy the debt, imprisonment is your doom; and, unless some friend, some extraneous resource, be discovered for you, 'tis *imprisonment for life*. The bankrupt or the insolvent, however profligate the contracting of his debts may have been, finds a term to his imprisonment. Two or three years the law deems sufficient as punishment for the most unprincipled of debtors: but the Government knows no bounds of vengeance. The law applicable to insolvents is not applicable here; to be a debtor to the Government, especially in these cases of revenue, is like being a debtor to death; the crown, which is called the fountain of mercy as well as of honour, knows, when it becomes a creditor of an unfortunate man, nothing at all of forgiveness; and is the only creditor to whose inexorable exactions the law sets no bounds.

Were there only this one thing belonging to the system of internal taxation, it ought to be abolished; it ought to be torn up by the roots and destroyed. If a man become a bankrupt, and be in debt for taxes or duties, the Government comes and takes all, if its demand amount to the whole, and leaves the other creditors without a farthing. But, besides this, there is always the monopoly attendant upon the tax. I have mentioned the case of malt, that of candles, soap, and every other taxed thing, is subject, from the same cause, to monopoly in a greater or less degree. The tax upon soap, including the monopoly, amounts to more than one-half of the price of the article. It is the restraint under which the soap-maker is placed, the annoyance and risk to which he is exposed; these are the causes of the monopoly, and they fully justify his charges on account of them; so that the nation actually pays from seven to eight millions a year in order to support a race of men called tax-gatherers, whose business it is to torment the persons who make and deal in the articles, and to augment unnecessarily the price of those articles far beyond that occasioned by the tax. Most of the persons who are in possession of these monopolies are but too prone to wish for their continuance.

They gain by the tax, because they make a great charge in consequence of their exclusive right to make the things. They are harassed and tormented by tax-gatherers ; but, at last, they contract a fellow-feeling with the government ; they consult their own interest, though they know that it is in open hostility to that of their country.

Another evil, arising out of this taxation, in detail is, the hypocrisy, the lying, the false swearing, and the fraudulent acts to which it is constantly giving rise. Then comes the state of dependence of all those who are engaged in the monopoly, and who feel themselves to be, at all times, in some degree, at the mercy of the Government and its magistrates. How many hundreds of men were ruined during the early part of the French war, for being even suspected of what was called "jacobinism!" As to those who had the monopoly of the retail of drink, they were the real personal slaves of the Government. They were frequently mustered by the magistrates, and compelled to give an account of conversations carried on in their houses. They were forced to obey, or the monopoly was gone. Maltsters, soap-boilers, and various others, subject to the laws of excise, were by no means in a better situation. All of them were subject to domiciliary visits, as indeed all of them are now ; and therefore they were agents in fact of the Government, to be spies upon the conduct of their neighbours ; and many of them were *actual* spies, and carried on their work in a manner the most effectual.

Another evil is the prodigious mass of idlers thus created, and these drawn too from sources most villainous. There is scarcely such a thing as an exciseman or tax-gatherer of any sort, down to the very doorkeepers and porters of the taxing offices, who does not owe his promotion to some work at an election, or to some patronage or other arising out of services of himself or parents, of a nature hostile to the well-being of the community. The various causes from which this innumerable horde of tormentors are selected, it would require a large volume to state. Their numbers are prodigious ; and for every one in possession, there are always two or three in expectancy ; and these, in the meanwhile, are at best unprofitable consumers of food and wearers of clothes. Then, as there is no law, either statute or in nature, to forbid them from producing their like, they proceed, in spite of the principles of Malthus, to add to the population of the country. None of them, and none of their

children, ever work ; ever produce anything useful to the community, to which they are a dead and intolerable burden, besides setting a constant example of laziness and of living at trick.

Now, gentlemen, would it not be a benefit to the country to sweep away this race of vermin ? I do not mean to sweep them off the face of the island, or to hurl them down into wells, or down chalk-pits ; but to make them cease to be what they are ; to make them submit to the general sentence pronounced by holy writ ; namely, to make them live by the sweat of their brow ; to condemn them ; in the words of the apostle, " those that will not work shall not eat ; " a sentence much more lenient than that which is, in fact, pronounced on those who now labour to support them ; namely, that though they *do work*, they shall be *half starved*.

Those only who have looked well into the matter can form an adequate idea of the evils which arise to a country from its containing great hordes of persons who are not employed to any useful purpose. It is very wisely observed by Lord BACON, who indeed never said a foolish thing, that one of the great causes of the overthrow of states, was the suffering of great numbers of idlers to exist in a country. He instances soldiers, and particularly clergymen who are married. These, he says, are the cause of great numbers being born who never can be expected to work ; though, in his time, parsons were not so pampered as to entertain the hope that their children must all be gentlemen and ladies. This, however, might be borne were there nothing but the clergy ; and did they all reside upon their livings, and have the livings belonging to them and not to others, their savings might provide a sufficiency for placing their children beyond the necessity of resorting to manual labour for their maintenance ; and as they would naturally be reared up in virtuous principles and good manners, there could not much evil arise from this source, from which persons of superior degree would arise ; but when to these are added the children of ten or fifteen thousand military and naval officers, and three times as many thousands of tax-gatherers of various sorts ; when this is the case, the evil becomes too great to be borne ; and, if not put a stop to in time, it must in the end produce the subversion of the state.

Therefore, one of the very first duties of a member of a reformed Parliament, is to use his utmost endeavours to cause a total abolition of these internal taxes, as being the

grand hot-bed for the breeding of idlers, and for perpetuating the breed. With regard to the tenth proposition, namely, that which relates to the duties received at the Custom-house, there appears never to have been a time when such duties did not form a part of the revenues in England. It would be too tedious at this time, and in this place, to enter into a detail of the particular articles proper to be taxed at the Custom-house; but it is easy to lay down the principle on which the legislature ought to proceed in the laying of those duties; and that principle is this, that the duties should not be imposed so much for the sake of the money proceeding from them as for the sake of the permanent good; that is to say, the permanent power and happiness of the nation. For the mere pecuniary gain is a small matter indeed, compared with the greatness and happiness of a country. If by a commercial treaty a nation, England for instance, could obtain an immensity of profit; if she could make three or four Manchesters spring up in a year; and if that treaty included a condition (supposing the treaty to be with France), that the French should occupy the coasts of Kent and Sussex, and build what fortresses they pleased there, will any man say that such a treaty ought to be entered into? This is an extreme case to be sure; but it serves to show that a nation may derive great gain from commerce, and ensure its own ruin by the same means, and at the same time. Every wise legislature will do all they can to add to the wealth of the country over which it presides; but it will take care, at the same time, not to purchase this wealth at the expense of the safety and power of the country. This ought to be the principle to guide those who lay on custom-house duties; and in this respect our forefathers evinced the greatest of wisdom, by constantly foregoing all prospects of pecuniary advantage, which were inconsistent with that great object, the fostering of our own navigation, and the securing of our dominion on the seas.

There is, at this time, a point which is by no means settled, with regard to our commercial intercourse with the United States of America: namely, whether a belligerent nation have the right to prevent the ships of a neutral nation covering the goods of the other belligerent. For instance, England and France being at war, and the Americans being at peace with both, whether an American ship shall have a right to carry French goods to Spain without being liable to have the goods taken out of her by an English ship as being

the goods belonging to the enemy, or whether, if the ship be bound to America itself with the French goods and the goods be the property of a Frenchman, or Frenchmen, we shall have a right to take out the goods; or whether, if a Frenchman have goods in the United States, and they be in an American ship going to France, or any of the territories of France, we shall have a right to take out these goods. Now, we contend for the affirmative of this right; we contend, that, in all these cases, we have a right to take out the goods; while the Americans contend, that, in the two latter cases at any rate, we have no such right, and that the neutral character of the ship ought to be communicated to the goods. Then, there is another ground of difference, relating to articles *contraband of war*. All nations allow the right of a belligerent to seize articles *contraband of war* found in a ship bound to the port of an enemy; but, then, ponderous volumes have been written to settle the point of *what are* articles contraband of war. The Americans make the list very short, and we make it very long; they confine it to arms, ammunition, warlike accoutrements and implements; we stretch it to hemp, sail-cloth, pitch, tar, and to everything that can be imagined, that goes to the making of a ship, or that can possibly be of any use in enabling an army to take the field; for instance, we include leather, as being intended to be used for making harness for horses to draw cannon with. But we do not stop here, very far from it; we include in our list every species of provisions, or, as the French call them, "*munitions de bouche*," in which indeed we are kept in countenance by this very French expression, which is a regular phrase, meaning eatables for an army or a navy.

Now, I am for the enforcing of all these rights claimed by us. I can offer as good arguments for them and as good authorities as JONATHAN can offer against them; besides which (and this is the great argument in discussing questions of national law) they are all *necessary to us*; we have the power of asserting them; and the giving of them up would be the sure and certain cause of the loss of our power. SELDEN proved, and clearly proved, in his time, that GROTIUS was wrong in contending that the seas were *the highway of nations*: he proved that England had, in all times, possessed, asserted, and uninterruptedly enjoyed, the sovereignty of the seas; and this being the case, and the sovereignty being still necessary to us, I am for maintaining it against cousin JONATHAN; for cousin here, or cousin there, we are not to

become feeble in order to gratify him. To talk of everlasting peace is nonsense: it is the dream of benevolent madmen. **JONATHAN** manifestly dreams of no such thing; for he wisely goes on making provision for war; and, indeed, *actually preparing for war.** I am for preparing too; and this brings me to the next proposition; namely, that for making effectual provision for the maintenance of a powerful navy.

The power of a navy does not, any more than that of an army, rest on its *numerical* force only, but also in the character of the materials of which it is composed, and particularly in that of the *men*, including those who command as well as those who have to obey. Every Englishman must blush at the recollection of what took place during the last war with the United States. The noise about *Waterloo* came very aptly to divert our attention, and false boast as that was, the nation seemed glad to squander its wealth on the reputed hero, as it were, to prove the reality of the glory, while its eyes were shut to the deep disgrace of the American war. What we then experienced, we must again experience three-fold, unless there be a complete renovation of the naval service. We have now a new and most formidable rival on the seas; and it is in vain that we hope to avoid a contest with him, for which contest he is preparing, and, what is more, he tells us that he is. We must therefore be prepared, not only with ships and guns and ammunition, but with *men* and *officers*, and those too of a stamp very different from that of those with whom we had to carry

* I cannot send this to the press without observing, that there is not one drop of blood in my heart that has not in it friendship towards the Americans. I admire their valour and the manner in which they defended their country against our Government in its unjust acts of aggression. I feel towards those, and the memory of those, who caused the brave Americans to be killed on Dart Moor, all the hatred that can exist in the human breast. On my own individual account, I owe the people of that country a debt of gratitude that I can never repay; and, as an Englishman, I owe them still greater gratitude for having prevented the boroughmonger Parliament from subduing them, and thereby having prevented it from everlastingly subduing us; which double subjugation was clearly their intention at the time when Sir JOSEPH YORKE, then a Lord of the Admiralty, said, in his place in Parliament, that England must not lay down her arms till JAMES MADISON was deposed. Had it not been for the valour of the Americans in the last war, England would, in my firm conviction, have presented to the world a den of miserable slaves for ages yet to come. Therefore I love the Americans, and rejoice in their prosperity and happiness; but it was my lot to be born in England, and it is my duty to endeavour to uphold her true greatness in preference to the greatness of all the other nations in the world.

n the late war, when it is notorious that, in nine cases out of ten, or more, we were beaten by an inferior force, in point of number of guns and men. The apologist for us who wrote the history of that war, has the miserable excuse that our seamen were worn out, and were *tired of fighting and of glory*. These are nearly the very words made use of by Mr. Ames, in his history of that war. He says that the Americans came *fresh* to the combat, and were full of hope of obtaining laurels. How precisely opposite this is to all the opinions and reasoning of mankind upon the same subject every one must know; therefore we are compelled to look for some other cause of that astonishing occurrence; namely, England beaten in a war single-handed by the American states.

The real cause was to be found in the great difference in the characters and qualities of our officers and men, and of their officers and men. I remember my Lord Cochrane telling me, that he believed that the crew of a small American ship, which he took with his frigate, in virtue of some order in council, would, though perhaps he had twice or thrice the number, have *weighed more*, if put into a scale, than his whole ship's crew; or than double their number of his ship's crew. This was a forcible way of expressing the vast superiority in the size and strength of the American seamen. The truth is this; I believe that the pay of the American seaman is as much for a week as the pay of an English seaman for a month. I will not speak positively here, not having the books at hand; but, at any rate, I know that it is a great deal more. Then, as to provisions and clothing, every possible care is taken in the American navy to provide for the good feeding and for the health of the men: and equal care is taken to prevent their being plundered by pursers, and by blaspheming Jews, both of whom plunder our poor dissolute creatures, who have never any ground of hope of being able to accumulate so much as twenty shillings, and whose pay is given to them at such times, and in such a manner, as to render it next to impossible for them to feel any encouragement to be economical and provident. Then, again, in the division of the prize-money, the proportion received by the American seaman is about ten times as great as that received by the English seaman, compared with that of the officers. I remember reading an account of the Deccan army prize-money, when the portion of the General commanding was FIFTY THOUSAND POUNDS, or upwards,

and the portion of the private soldier *sixteen shillings*. The payment too of this prize-money is so difficult to be obtained by the seaman, that great numbers of them die in vain pursuit of the payment ; and those who have read the *Register*, will recollect that the poor sailor Cashman, who was hanged as a traitor, for having joined a contemptible and noisy riot in London, expired in declaring, that, sent from agent to agent in search of his prize-money, he had been reduced to a state nearly approaching to starvation, and had finally got into the riot, not knowing what he did. The American seamen have the most complete security as to this matter. Their prize-money is as surely theirs as the rent of a farm is the landlord's. That, as well as their pay, takes place regularly and without delay, without any cost or any difficulty. They can make over the power of receiving both, or any portion of both, to their parents, their wives, their children, or their friends.

Thus, to be an American seaman, is even a profitable calling ; and then, with regard to *promotion*, that great stimulus to good conduct and valour, the course is always clear.

Hence it is that the Americans stand in no need of the cruel and disgraceful practice of impressment. They stand in no need of this, in no need of boarding merchant-ships, tearing away the hands, and thus inflicting great injury on the owner and the merchant ; no need of this monstrous act of violating the contracts between all the parties ; no need of that, which has always been a disgrace to England, which has always arisen from the same cause ; namely, the want of sufficient pay, the want of good and sufficient food and clothing ; the want of just and punctual payment of wages and of prize-money ; and, above all things, the want of a fair chance in the way of promotion, the want of just rewards of conduct and of valour, of which I shall speak more fully by-and-by.

The seamen of the American navy are not profligate and abandoned persons, sent to sea to be gotten rid of ; they are not men running away from the pursuit of justice ; they are not creatures picked up where they can be picked up, and frequently condemned to serve on board ship as a punishment for crimes. They are young men well bred up, and of fair prospects in the world ; the greater part of them sons of farmers, farming their own land ; some the sons of tradesmen of respectable state in life ; and very rarely of a dissolute character.

It is not, in the American navy, a difficulty to obtain men ; there are always enough to offer ; and the service has to choose among the best, and not to take the refuse of merchant ships. Hence the men are strong and well-behaved ; each is a character to sustain as much as if he were still on shore on the spot where he was born. To secure obedience nongst men of this description great severity is not required ; and hence it is that English seamen have been found so prone to desert to American ships.

Now, unless we can bring our navy to resemble that of America in this respect, we can never, man for man, and gun for gun, meet that navy, without risk of incurring disgrace. But if we were to make the thing right in all other respects, we should still fail, unless we made a complete change with regard to the principle of *promotion*. We have never been wise in this respect, we have always given a preference to the aristocracy and its dependents ; we have always suffered that villainous thing called *interest* to prevail against merit, the merit never so great. Instead of the word *interest* we should make use of that of *corruption*. But if we have always been unwise in this respect, what are we now ? Till of late years, there were occasionally admirals who had been common sailors, we saw lieutenants and masters and commanders who had been before the mast. But now how's it ? Why now there is a naval academy, established on the same principle as the military academy, the expenses, the purposes, and the effects of which, I described to you the other night. Out of this naval academy all future officers of the navy are to come ; and who they are that go into that naval academy I need not say, for the famous *interest* is at work there also, and here it must be at work as long as this system shall remain. I remember my Lord Cochrane telling the House of Commons to its face, that a common sailor, however meritorious, however skilful, however brave, never could again be an officer in the navy ; and that this was not only unjust, a regulation of great injustice towards the middle and lower class of the people ; but that it was also the most unwise that ever was thought of in the world ; for that great numbers of the best and most efficient officers had come from before the mast.* This is notoriously the case ; this de-

* I cannot put upon paper this passage of my speech without observing that I have just read, in the London papers, an account of some grant made by that part of our rulers who are called Surveyors

scription of men were always held in honour; but never can we, till the system be changed, see one of them again. There are probably two or three thousand midshipmen who served before the close of the late war. Not a man of these, except in virtue of interest, will ever be called into the service again. There are thousands of lieutenants, I believe, in the same situation; all the new officers, as in the case of the army, are taken out of the academy. And, as to the promotion; as to the fairness and impartiality of it, a return, laid before the Parliament a few years ago, showed that there were persons belonging to the aristocratical families, who were become post-captains over the heads of thousands upon thousands of seniors in the service; and that some of these post-captains, amongst whom were the son of CANNING, the son of Lord MELVILLE, the son of Sir Joseph YORKE, a son of Lord SPENCER, and others, who were actually in the command of ships, having under them sailing-masters, and lieutenants, *who were serving at sea before these captains were born!* And, is it with stuff like this that we are to fight JONATHAN! That disgraceful war with America was commenced by one of these sprigs of nobility, whose

of Crown Lands to this really gallant officer, who is now become an EARL. I do hope, from the great respect and great regard which I have always borne and still bear towards him, that his lordship will not by this act, or by any other act of his life, seem to express an acquiescence in the justice of that sentence of infamy that was passed upon him in 1814. For my own part, I have always believed, and still believe most sincerely, that he was wholly innocent of the charge. If he had done the thing which was imputed to him, it would have been no crime, but merely a folly, in sinking himself, for the moment, down to a level with a loanmonger or a stock-jobber. I was perfectly well acquainted with the whole of the transactions at the time; the conviction in my mind was, and still is, that he was entirely innocent of the charge. However, if he was innocent, how is he ever to forgive, *until atonement be made to him*; how is he ever to forgive the sentence of infamy passed upon him and his subsequent degradation from the Order of the Bath? If it be lawful for the Surveyors of Crown Lands to make presents of the nation's property, there are very few persons on whom I should like to see a bit of public land bestowed better than this nobleman, if he were in a situation to make me think it consistent with his honour to receive the gift. But, seeing his present situation with regard to this Government, King and all, I must say, that I shall be very much pleased to find that the newspapers have given a wrong information upon the subject. He is one of the men to whom the nation ought to look for great services in the times that are coming; and, again I express my hope that he will neither say nor do anything which shall seem to express an acquiescence in the justice of the treatment which he received in 1814.

name was Dacre, and who was a relative of the lord of that name. Being a captain of a frigate, and being in the West Indies, he was dispatched to the coast of the United States. Recollecting the story of VAN TAOMP, he hoisted a broom at his mast-head, thereby notifying his resolution to *sweep the seas* of the ships of the enemy. JONATHAN went out with a frigate, beat him in ten minutes, and took him into port as a prisoner of war, the broom still sticking at the mast-head. A captain, who had come from before the mast, might have been unable to beat the Yankee; but such a captain would have gone to the bottom; or, at least, laid his own body dead upon the deck. He would not have been led in at any rate in this lady-like manner; and, if the nation had lost its ship, it would not have lost its honour.

Now, unless all this can be changed, a reform of the Parliament is totally useless: it can do no good; it will only excite false hopes and groundless expectations. If the people, and especially in these towns in the north, have not a new mind and a new soul upon this occasion; if they do not cast aside all the motives by which electors have been hitherto actuated; if they, not from corrupt motives, but from half-selfish, half-childish considerations, return men to Parliament who are accessible to the blandishments of those whose interest it is that the system should still be supported in its present form and effects, all that the reform will do, is to proclaim to the world that Englishmen richly deserve their degradation and their misery.

If there be that new soul, there will be a total change of the system; and amongst other changes will come that which is expressed in the twelfth proposition; namely, to place the King in a situation becoming his exalted rank, his most important functions, and the greatness of the country of which he is the chief. I propose that the money granted for the use of his Majesty, and for the use of all the members of his family through him, should be at his own absolute disposal; and that he should have the real, and not the nominal, appointment of all his officers and servants of every description. It is greatly disadvantageous to the King that the nation do not know what part of its resources it is that really goes to his use. More than a million of money is voted yearly for what is called the Civil List; and then the people, looking upon the King as the sole cause of this enormous expenditure, and comparing it with the salary of the President of the United States, conclude that kingly government is essentially dear, and that republican government

left, and standing nearer his person than anybody else! It is useless to comment on such a fact: it speaks for itself; and no one who has any wish to see the kingly government maintained can fail to desire to see an end to a system that could possibly render such precautions necessary. I may deceive myself; I may be a bad judge of the matter; but, according to my judgment, the way to cause the King to be held in honour by all his subjects, and to receive from them a willing obedience, is to place him in the situation described in the proposition, the measures pointed out in which I have been endeavouring to defend.

But, gentlemen, in order to have the means of defraying the expense of a navy, such as I have described, and to have at the same time a sufficiency to meet the expenses occasioned by the King, the officers of state, the judges, ministers at foreign courts, and some other establishments necessary to the good government of the country, there must be a revenue. The pensions, and other things of that sort, the standing army, and all its monstrous expenses; the taxing establishments: all these my propositions sweep away. But they leave a powerful navy to be provided for, and also the expenses belonging to the King and his court. They give him the absolute control over his parks, gardens, and palaces; and in speaking of these latter, one would wonder what he could do with them all; and I dare say people in general are afraid that they must be rotting and moulderling into decay; for though an abundance of money is granted for the keeping them up, and keeping them in good order, still, as he never lives at Hampton-court or Kensington, for instance, the walls must become damp, and the place not fit to live in. If you were to go to those palaces you would be most agreeably disappointed; for they are always full of most excellent company; and you would see brass-plates on the doors of the suits of apartments, informing you that this lord, that lady, this honourable miss, and that honourable gentleman, were the inhabitants of the place; and at Kensington-palace you would see, amongst others, the name of that Mr. Cross, who now so boldly arraigns the Ministers for their intention to make a reform of the Parliament! I dare say, that if it were proposed to put these people out of the palaces, they would insist upon it that they had a "vested" right of possession; and if the King himself were to think proper to go in to look at the apartments, it would excite surprise in nobody that knows them, if they were to regard him as a traitor.

passer, and ask him what the devil he was doing there. Where there is a *vesting* there can be a *divesting*; and I should have little hope of a reformed Parliament, that should sit a month without sending these gentry to hire lodgings for themselves, and restoring the King to the possession of his own palaces.*

To return to the expenses of the country, we must first observe, though it seems to be always overlooked, that the country governs itself, and pays for its own government, wholly independently of the government up at London. This part of the institutions of the country still exists in form at any rate. Each county has a complete government in itself; it has a lord-lieutenant, a sheriff, justices of the peace, and all inferior officers; it has a militia, when the *posse* of the sheriff is found insufficient for the purpose of keeping the peace. It provides for all these by a tax called the county-rate. It has no need of any interference of the Government up in London, except that it wants the King to appoint its sheriff and its justices and its lord-lieutenant; to give his commissions to the officers of its militia, and to send his judges twice a year, to cause justice to be executed, and to decide, in conjunction with the juries, on matters relative to the differences between man and man. The counties pay, and pay well, for the governing of themselves, just as the several States of America do; and this one county of Lancaster pays more for this purpose than any four or five of the American States. When the tax-eaters tell us, therefore, and when good foolish people adopt the tale, that *Government must be supported*, the proper answer is, that the Government is supported in the counties, and in the several cities and towns; but what they mean by Government are, the fundholders, the dead-weight, the pensioners, and sinecure-people, the haunters of the club-houses, and all the swarms of idlers that devour the substance of the nation. The county-rate, that is to say, the money that is raised to support the Government in the county, to keep peace and

* There is a personage, particularly dear to the inhabitants of Manchester, whose name is HENRY ADDINGTON, and whose title is Lord Viscount SIDMOUTH; amidst lofty and beautiful trees, and surrounded by herds of fat fallow-deer, lives this noble viscount, in a palace, in the middle of Richmond-park, surrounded with a high wall, ten miles in length. How he came there, not being yet a member of a reformed Parliament, I have no means of discovering. But having a great desire to know how it was, I shall certainly, if I become such member, not fail to ascertain to the greatest nicety.

order, and to cause property to be protected and justice to be done, is raised in the county ; but then it is expended in the county, as it ought to be, and not carried away out of it, to be expended in London, in Paris, or in Rome.

What, then, is required to support the kingly government ? It would be quite ample to leave at the sole disposal of the King, about one hundred or one hundred and fifty thousand pounds a year ; quite sufficient to allow three hundred thousand pounds more for officers of state, judges, ambassadors, and contingent expenses appertaining to this general government ; for as to colonies, it is mere hypocrisy, if not perfidy, to pretend that it can be beneficial to hold a colony that calls upon the nation for one single farthing of expense, beyond that which is incurred by keeping up a navy to protect those colonies against the hostility of foreign states. The whole of the navy, during the last peace, cost little more than a million of pounds sterling a year. Let it now cost three millions and a half, and then it would bring the whole expenditure of the kingdom, exclusive of the government of the counties, down to four millions a year, or to five at the very utmost. I defy any man to point out the necessity of any expenditure beyond this. The whole of the government expenses of the United States ; the general government, with its army, navy, ambassadors, custom-house officers, and all put together ; and adding thereto the government expenses of the twenty States, of which the UNION now consists : all these put together do not amount to three millions of pounds sterling a year. Why should we want more ; and if we do not want more, why should we raise more ?

However, I am for making a large provision for the navy, because I would have the sailors well paid, and have them able and faithful. We have now three generals to every regiment of foot and every regiment of horse, and two admirals to every ship of the line. I should be afraid to state this fact, if it did not stand recorded in books published by the Government, or persons acting with the approbation of the Government. The fact is so monstrous, that it seems to call in question, not only the spirit, but also the sanity that permits an abuse so outrageous. If, because we have so long been paying sixty millions a year to the divers sorts of tax-gatherers, you think you cannot be safe in your houses if we pay only four or five millions a year, then indeed you must continue to pay the sixty ; but observe, at the same time, that a parliamentary reform is a thing neither wanted

nor to be rationally desired. It is for the express purpose of lightening the burdens of the people : it is for the express purpose of making cheap government, and, if it do not answer this purpose, it will be a great deal better for it never to take place.

Now, gentlemen, for the means of raising, in a cheap, easy, and sure manner, these four or five millions a year ; for, if the sum be not reduced to that, in time of peace ; if a reformed Parliament will not cause it to be reduced to that, it shall be but for a very short time that I will have anything to do with that parliament. These means are, in the first place, custom-house duties ; these now amount to about seventeen millions of pounds sterling a year. They might, with great advantage to commerce and manufactures, be reduced to three or four, and still leave sufficient protection to navigation, and to certain manufactures. But I would have a general, uniform, and cheaply-collected tax on real property. I would have all the houses, lands, mines, and other real property, valued ; the amount of tax on each parcel of property should be fixed, and be paid quarterly by the person in occupation ; and the payment should take place on the same day in every county, and at different places in the county, in order to make the matter as little inconvenient as possible. The payment should be enforced by a process at once speedy and effectual, and the parties liable to pay should bring the money to the appointed place, and not have it demanded of them at their several places of abode. There would be no need of any expense of collection beyond a mere trifle to the person appointed to receive the money from the county ; because the county should take care to have the money brought and paid at the several places appointed for the payment.

Some people will say, that it is unjust to tax real property, and nothing else ; while others have said, I dare say, that to take off the tithes, is only giving their amount to the landlords. These are very narrow views taken of the matter. A tax upon land is a tax upon everything which the land produces. If you lay a pound of tax upon a landlord, he lays it on upon the tenant in rent ; and the tenant lays it upon his wheat and his meat and other produce. All of us are consumers, according to our several means of consumption. In this the landlord and the farmer would pay their share of the land-tax, which, like every other tax, spreads its influence in the way of privation over the whole community ; but a direct tax on real property is the best, because it is so certain

in amount and so cheap in the collection. A pound of tax laid upon the landlord of a house is charged by him to his tenant; the tenant, if he be in any business, divides it among his customers; and if he be not in any business, he deducts it in some shape or other from his servants, or from those with whom he is accustomed to deal.

A tax of this sort, like the air, reaches everything; but it is at the same time free from all the vexation, all that annoyance, all that endless torment, and those acts of merciless tyranny, which always did, and always must, grow out of a tax on consumable commodities. It is just the same with regard to tithes. The tithes would not be given to the landlord any more than to the rest of the community; nor are they in their nature at all oppressive any more than rent is. The farmer has two landlords in place of one, that is all; and the taking away of the benefices of the clergy is only, in fact, the putting an end to so many small proprietors of land. But, in the first place, the property belongs to the public and the poor; in the next place, it is consumed by those who do nothing for it. The tithe taken away from the parsons, the benefit is diffused amongst the whole of the community; and this is the ground for taking it away, and not because it is a hinderance to agriculture. A tax upon real property, at 4 per cent. upon the rental, would yield about four millions a year in Great Britain; and extended to Ireland, it might yield four and a half or five. It would be varied of course, according to the wants of the state; and of these wants the representatives of the people would be the judge.

One conspicuous benefit which must inevitably arise from the change is this: that nine-tenths of the time which is now spent by the Parliament in discussing the details of taxation; and in discussing the merits of petitions, containing complaints on the score of the divers taxes, would all be saved. That enormous volume of laws which each session now products, equal in bulk to all the statutes of any ten kings before the reign of the House of Hanover, would be reduced to the size of one of those pamphlets which the boroughmongers' Parliament allowed us to publish, at a price not less than sixpence; and the reformed House of Commons, driving Bellamy's boozing-ken from beneath its roof, would have time by day-light soberly to consider the measures necessary to provide for the happiness of the people, to preserve the power and uphold the honour of the kingdom.

LECTURE VI.

31st December, 1831.

GENTLEMEN,

It remains for me to submit to you the reasons on which I found the fourteenth and last proposition, which is expressed in these words :—

14. To cause the PROTESTANT HIERARCHY to be legally repealed and abolished in Ireland ; and to cause the Parliament of the whole kingdom to hold its sessions, and the King to hold his Court, IN IRELAND once in every three years ; and to cause the same to take place in the city of YORK once in every three years, and also in the city of SALISBURY once in every three years.

If all or any part of the former propositions were "wild and visionary ;" if these epithets were justly applicable to them, where will you be able to find epithets descriptive of the wildness of this proposition ? I am, however, fortunately circumstanced here : I have to do with a patient that the doctors have given up ; with that sort of patient of which the sons of the healing art say, " Nothing more can be done for him : let him have just what he fancies." In short, such is the state of Ireland, according even to the confessions of the Government itself, that no suggestion relative to measures for making it better off than it is can be deemed presumptuous, be they what they may, and come from what source they may. Every one says that some great change in the affairs of Ireland is necessary ; but no one attempts to say what change. Those who pour forth complaints in the name of Ireland, however just those complaints may be, and however able the organ of putting them forth, invariably confine themselves to making the complaints, to describing the injuries and the sufferings of Ireland, to suggesting evils to be remedied, but seldom or never do they suggest the remedy,

As to the Government, it acknowledges, both in its words and its deeds, that the state of that part of the kingdom has

become, in *their* hands, as bad as it can possibly be ; that nothing can make that state worse ; that any change may be for the better ; that no change can be for the worse ; so that, as that which I propose is a very great change, it cannot be deemed presumption in me to propose its adoption.

Besides, gentlemen, I have this further pretension to be listened to, in this case, that I have been right, in several instances, in predicting the coming of these evils to Ireland, when the Government, and when even the strictest partisans of Ireland, have been wrong. It is now much about ten years ago since I insisted that prosperity and tranquillity never could be known to Ireland until the Protestant hierarchy were repealed, and until poor-laws were established in that country. I should give you no pleasure by describing, even if my memory would enable me to do it, the ridicule and censure which were so unsparingly poured out upon me for entertaining and promulgating this opinion. At the time when the measure of *Catholic emancipation* was pressed upon the attention of the Parliament and indeed at every time when it was so pressed, from the year 1819 to the time when it was finally granted, I always contended for it, as an act of justice due to Ireland ; but at the same time I never omitted to contend that that *alone* would neither tranquillize nor benefit Ireland ; and I could refer to a hundred passages in my writings in proof of this fact. When the grand meeting took place upon Penenden Heath, in Kent, in the month of October 1828, for the purpose of petitioning the Parliament to grant Catholic emancipation ; and when the Tories, as they were called, ranged themselves in opposition to that petition, I ranged myself in opposition to it also, though it was brought forward by a gentleman of that county for whom I had the greatest respect, and seconded by a nobleman whom I respected perhaps more than any other man in the world. I did not, indeed, join the Tories in their petition ; but presented a petition of my own, praying the Parliament to grant Catholic emancipation ; but *not to grant it unaccompanied by a repeal of the Protestant hierarchy.*

As we approached the passing of the *Emancipation Bill*, I became more zealous in my endeavours to show that that bill would be of no use *unless accompanied by poor-laws, and a repeal of the Protestant hierarchy.* I was perfectly indefatigable in my endeavours to inculcate this belief. In opposition to my opinion was almost the whole of the press, as

soon as the Duke of Wellington and Peel had been converted, by that miracle which so surprisingly operated upon their souls. While the bill was before the Houses of Parliament, I did my best to cause it to be passed ; but never did I mention the subject without, at the same time, urging upon my readers the truth, that the bill would do nothing without an abolition of the Protestant hierarchy, and an introduction of the poor-laws.* The very next year the discontents of Ireland were greater, and their consequences more dreadful than ever. The Emancipation Bill gave rise to new feuds, and placed the Government in a more perilous situation than it had ever been in before. The Government became a party in the feuds ; and the country, from one end to the other, became divided, and that too upon grounds which gave no hope of any future change for the better, unless something very much like revolution took place. The state of Ireland was bad enough before the measure of emancipation was adopted ; but when that measure had been adopted the people of Ireland saw that the ground of quarrel had been, not between Catholic and Protestant ; when the law had put Catholics upon a level with Protestants, as to all civil matters and powers, the quarrel became clearly one between Irishmen and the descendants of Englishmen ; all the old wounds were torn open ; and the Catholic Emancipation Bill held forth the supremacy in Church and State, as a prize for the two hostile parties to contend for. Indeed it is perfectly notorious that the situation of Ireland has been growing worse and worse, and more and more replete with danger, ever since the passing of that famous bill.

Now, as I so repeatedly and so fully and so distinctly repeated, all these consequences of that bill ; and as the Duke of Wellington and Peel, joining with Lords Grey and Althorp ; as both the parties in Parliament most cordially joined in expressing their confident expectations of tranquillity and prosperity to Ireland, being amongst the consequences of that measure ; as Mr. O'Connell and Mr. Sheil,

* I beg leave to refer the readers to the *Register* of the 26th of August, 1829 ; and also to the petition presented by me at Penenden Heath, which he will find in the last *Register* of the month of October, 1828 ; also to the divers *Registers* written during the time that the Catholic Emancipation Bill was before the two Houses of Parliament. In these writings the reader will be so good as to look for the ground of my pretensions to offer advice with regard to Ireland at this moment.

and the whole of the Catholic Association, expressed the same expectations, as they consented to dissolve their Association upon the bare bringing in of the Emancipation Bill; and as upon the same ground they assented to the disfranchisement of the forty-shilling-freeholders of Ireland, declaring that the bill was so great a good, was so high a price, that it could not be purchased at too dear a rate: describing it as the bond of peace and of union, as the rivet of everlasting affection between England and Ireland, as this was the language of all these persons and parties; and as my language and my sentiments, as fully laid before the public, were precisely the opposite of these; and as the event has now proved that I was right, and that they were all wrong: these facts being notoriously true, I trust, gentlemen, that you will not deem it presumption that I now submit to you propositions which these same persons and parties will, in all probability, be as much disposed to censure as they were my opinions of 1828 and 1839.

I now come (thus sanctioned by experience) to the measures mentioned in the proposition which I have just had the honour to read to you. The *repeal of the Protestant hierarchy* in Ireland I have always, since I understood anything of the matter, regarded as absolutely necessary, as a beginning to make Ireland other than a burden to England, as it now is, and as it has been for the last forty years, or thereabouts. Even that would not do without an introduction of the poor-laws; but as one would naturally lead to the other, I only think it necessary to show that the hierarchy ought to be repealed, and to be repealed at once and completely. In order to do this, and to show that it would include nothing unjust towards anybody, I must go into a sort of history of the connexion of Ireland with England, which I trust you will indulge me in doing, when you shall consider the vast importance of the subject. If Ireland were indeed a bunch of rocks like the Scilly Islands, or a pitiful province like one of the Cantons of Switzerland, the inhabitants of which are suffered to exist in their present state in order to breed butchers to be hired by those despots to be watchmen for the persons of the despots, and to cut, when need be, the throats of their subjects: if it were a beggarly bunch of rocks, with here and there a valley, affording just food enough to rear up wretches who go and sell themselves to fight, brother against brother, and father against son, in the armies of the contending despots.

if Ireland were a thing of this sort, I should think it extremely unreasonable to waste a moment of your time in listening to observations respecting it. But Ireland is a really great and fertile country, though its fertility has been, in some measure, rendered useless by misgovernment. At any rate, it is a country separated from England by nothing more than what the Americans would call a river; in dominion and resources it is inseparable from England; it is, in fact, a part of the very same country, and a part of it it must always remain, though it appears to have been the policy of the greater part of our rulers, for a series of ages, to consider it and treat it as a colony. Such being the importance of this part of the kingdom, and such its close connexion with England, no man of common sense will talk of anything to promote the greatness and prosperity of the kingdom, without including Ireland in every measure which he has to recommend. Let me now briefly state the history of this connexion.

There was a time, to be sure, before the nations of the continent extended their views in this western direction, that Ireland was wholly separate from England, in point of sway. The King of England had nothing to do with it, and it was governed by its petty princes, in conjunction with the Catholic bishops and priests, who, amidst all the wars that occasionally took place, had influence enough to uphold the Catholic religion. Ireland was looked upon by the Pope, as belonging to him as supreme sovereign. God knows how many popes there have been, from the days of St. Peter down to the present time; but I know that there never was but one Englishman a Pope. He was a very old man when he was made Pope; and, having Ireland to give away, he would have been an unnatural dog indeed if he had forgotten his own country. In short, he made England a *present* of Ireland; and upon that ground the King of England, Henry II., claimed it, and sent as great a ruffian as ever the world theretofore had seen to take possession of it in his name. For several ages the possession was but partial; and though the kings of England squeezed Ireland now and then pretty smartly, and caused it to suffer great cruelties from their myrmidons, called governors and commanders, there was no ground for general and bitter hostility and deadly persecution, until the *Protestant Reformation* had taken place, and until the reign of the savage Queen Elizabeth. Ireland had frequently been severely punished by the English before: it had

long been a country occasionally given up to be robbed and sacked by the rapacious courtiers of England ; but the Catholic religion existing in both countries, there was no valid excuse for the general and blood-thirsty persecution which commenced in the reign of Elizabeth, who sent her Protestant parsons, as Mahomet sent myrmidons, to force themselves into the Irish churches, sword in hand, and to drag the people to hear in those churches that which they deemed heresy and blasphemy. To give an adequate description of the scenes in Ireland at the time here referred to sets defiance to all eloquence, even if I had any at my command.

It was clearly seen that the Protestant parsons and bishops never could receive tithes, or be suffered to live in Ireland without a *transfer of property* from Catholics to Protestants. Hence a system of plundering, the most barefaced, the most atrocious, and most extensive, that ever was beheld in the world, was invented and acted upon. First, the people were goaded on to what were called acts of *rebellion* ; these were followed by *forfeitures*, extending over whole counties and provinces ; these forfeitures were to the crown, in virtue of the law of high treason ; the crown then granted away or sold the estates thus forfeited ; and thus the thing went on, until within the last hundred years : hence the estates of the Irish became the property of the English. But to the everlasting praise of the Irish people, nothing could drive them from the religion of their fathers. Their sufferings on this score exceed those of any other people upon the face of the earth. However, in proportion as the estates were taken from them, the bodily persecutions diminished in severity. The *Protestant hierarchy*, which had been established by force, has continued to collect its revenues, always detested by the vast majority of the people, but enjoying a compulsory obedience : it existed in comparative safety under the protection of laws which excluded the Catholics from all share of civil and political power. But this exclusion having been removed by the Emancipation Bill, which, while it repealed all the penal laws against the Catholics, declared as competent and as fit to enjoy civil, military, naval, and political power, as the Protestants were ; in fact, declared that a Catholic was as fit to be a general, an admiral, a sheriff, a judge, or to sit in council with the King, as a Protestant was. This wholly changed the face of things, and it amounted to an implied declaration that the Protestant Reformation had been unnecessary to the upholding the

kingly power and promoting the prosperity of the kingdom; and this declaration having been made, with what feelings were Catholics to look back on the persecutions and the blunderings which they had endured for the sake of introducing the Protestant religion instead of the Catholic? Aye, but this was not all; this was a mere trifle compared to the declaration to which the Emancipation Act amounted, that the *Protestant hierarchy* was now no longer necessary, to Ireland at the least, whatever it might be to England.

The consequences of the great and natural revolution produced in men's minds by this measure we have had constantly before us, from the time of the passing of the bill to this very hour. For my own part, I so clearly foresaw the consequences, and was so desirous of making a solemn declaration upon the subject, that, in a very little while after the bill was passed, I presented to the House of Commons a petition, dated on the 20th of April 1829, concluding with a prayer, that the House would be pleased to pass a law "to 'repeal, abrogate, abolish, and render utterly frustrate and 'of no effect the Protestant Church, now established by law 'in Ireland; " and that it would be pleased "to cause to be 'in that part of the kingdom, *effectual provision for the 'relief of the poor.*"* Thus, then, gentlemen; that which

* The petition, which was presented by Mr. Denison, one of the Members for the county of Surrey, who, according to a note which he had previously addressed to me, expressed his disagreement in opinion with the petitioner; the petition was in the following words:

To the Honourable the Commons of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, in Parliament assembled.

THE PETITION OF WILLIAM COBBETT, OF BARNES, IN THE COUNTY OF SURREY,

Most humbly sheweth,

That your petitioner prays your Honourable House, that the Protestant Church of Ireland, as by law established, may be, by law, repealed and utterly abrogated and abolished; and that this prayer he founds on the facts which he, with the greatest respect, will now proceed to submit to your Honourable House.

That, until the year 1547, the Catholic religion was the only religion known in Ireland: that, after the Protestant religion was introduced into England, it was, by law, made to be the religion taught in the churches in Ireland; that a Protestant clergy were made to supplant the Clergy of the ancient religion; that the latter were turned out of the livings and the churches; that the altars were pulled down and the Mass abolished, and the Protestant Table and Common Prayer forcibly introduced in their stead.

That the people of Ireland saw with great indignation this attempt to force upon them a new and strange religion, and to compel them to

I now propose to you, with regard to the Protestant hierarchy of Ireland, is by no means a new project got up for this occasion. It is in accordance with my long-entertained and fixed

abandon and become apostates to that religion in which they had been born and bred, that religion which had been the religion of their fathers for many centuries, and the truth, purity, and wisdom of which were so clearly proved by its happy effects.

That, therefore, the people rejected this new religion, of the origin of which, or of the authority by which it was imposed on them, they had, and could have, no idea; but that the Government of England persisted in compelling the Irish to submit to an abandonment of the ancient and to an adoption of the new religion.

That, in order to effect this purpose, clergymen to officiate in the churches of Ireland were sent from England, and that to these the tithes and other Church-revenues were all transferred, leaving the Catholic clergy to beg or starve; but that, such was the abhorrence which the Irish people entertained at the thought of apostatizing from their religion, that they shunned as they would have shunned deposits of deadly pestilence those churches, to which they had before resorted with punctuality and zeal surpassed by the people of no nation on the earth; and that, still clinging to their faithful pastors, they secretly sought in houses, in barns, in woods, in caves, amongst rocks, or in fastnesses of some sort, the comforts of that communion to which they no longer dared to resort in open day.

The Government, irritated at this contumacy, as it was called, but fidelity, as it ought to have been called, resorted to means the most tyrannical, the most cruel, and even the most ferocious, in order to subdue this pious fidelity; that it inflicted fine, imprisonment, torture, or death, and sometimes two or three of these all upon the same person; that it confiscated not only innumerable estates belonging to Catholics, but whole counties at once, on the plea that this was necessary in order to plant the Protestant religion; that the lands thus confiscated were given to Protestants; and that, in reality, the former owners were extirpated, or made little better than slaves to the intruders.

That, however, in spite of acts of tyranny, at the thought of which Nero and Caligula would have started with horror, which acts continued to be enforced with unabated rigour for more than 200 years; that in spite of these acts of fining, confiscating, plundering, racking, and killing, all having in view one single object, that of compelling the people to conform to the Church as by law established; that, in spite of all these atrocious acts, these matchless barbarities of two hundred years, the people of Ireland, though their country was frequently almost literally strewed with mangled bodies, and made red with blood, adhered with unabated fidelity to the religion of their land and of our fathers; that in spite of death continually looking them in the face; in spite of prisons, racks, halters, axes, and the bowel-ripping knife; in spite of all these, their faithful priests have never deserted them; and that the priests now in Ireland are the successors of thousands of heroic martyrs, many of whom were actually ripped up and cut into quarters.

That, nevertheless, the new Church, by law established, got safely into her possession all the property that had belonged to the ancient

opinions upon the subject. And I trust, that very little need be said to convince you that it is impossible to make Ireland tranquil and happy, to make it any other than a grievous

Church ; and that she took all the tithes, all the parsonage-houses, all the glebes, all the landed estates, which in Ireland are of immense extent and value ; so that Ireland, for nearly three hundred years, continued to exhibit, and still exhibits, the strange sight of an enormously rich established Church nearly without flocks, and on the other hand, an almost mendicant priesthood with flocks comprising the main part of the people ; it exhibits a religious system, which takes the use of the churches from the millions, and gives it to the thousands ; that takes the churches from that religion by the followers of which they were founded and endowed, and gives them to that religion the followers of which protest against the faith of the founders and endowers, and brand their religion as idolatrous and damnable.

That your petitioner can form an idea of no being short of a fiend, in point of malignity and cruelty, capable of viewing such a scene without feelings of horror ; and, therefore he is confident, that your Honourable House, still, as he hopes, animated with the benevolent spirit which led to the recent enactment in favour of the persecuted Catholics, will hasten to put an end to a scene so disgraceful, and to injustice so flagrantly outrageous.

That it must be manifest to every one, that there could be, for giving the vast revenues of the Church of Ireland to a Protestant Clergy, no ground other than that those revenues might be applied in such manner as to cause the main body of the people to become and remain Protestants, and that, too, of the communion established by law : that those revenues, on the most moderate estimate, amount to three millions of pounds sterling a year ; that several of the Irish bishops have, of late years, left, at their death, personal property exceeding, for each, two hundred thousand pounds ; that the deaneries and prebends, and other benefices in the Church of Ireland, as by law established, are of great value ; and that your humble petitioner is sure that your Honourable House will not deem him presumptuous, if he take it for granted, that your Honourable House will allow, that it is impossible that any Government in its senses, that any but tyrants, and mad tyrants, too, would have given these immense revenues to the Protestant clergy, unless with a view, and in the confident expectation, of seeing the people, or a large part of them at any rate, converted to the Protestant faith, and joining in the Protestant communion ; for, that, otherwise, it must have been evident, that those immense revenues could only serve to create division, and to perpetuate all the passions hostile to the peace and prosperity of a country.

That, however, at the end of two hundred and seventy-six years, there are, in Ireland, even a less number of Church Protestants than, as your humble petitioner finds good historical reason for believing, there were an hundred and eighty years ago ; and that it is a fact generally admitted, that the Church Protestants in that country have long been, and still are, decreasing in number, compared with that of the Catholics, and also compared with that of those Protestant sects who stand aloof from her Common Prayer and Communion ; that it is an undoubted fact, that, in many parishes, there are scarcely any

burden to England, unless this, the prayer of my petition, be acted upon. What do we behold in Ireland at this moment? For years past we have seen the tithes collected by

Protestants at all; that, in some parishes there is not one; that throughout the whole country, there is not, on an average, more than one Church-Protestant to every six Catholics or Dissenters; and that, while the Catholics are shut out of the churches founded and endowed by their forefathers of the same faith, and while these churches are empty, or at best echo to the solitary voice of the stipendiary agent of the opulent and luxurious non-residing incumbent, the Catholics are compelled, either to abandon the public practice of their worship, to build chapels at their own expense, or, which they are frequently compelled to do, kneel down on the ground and in the open air.

That, if your Honourable House will hardly be able to refrain from expressing deep indignation at the thought of a scene like this (existing, apparently, with your approbation), it would be presumption, indeed, in your humble petitioner, to attempt to estimate the feelings with which you must contemplate the present state of the Irish Church, as by law established, and the present application of its prodigious revenues.

That there are in Ireland 3,403 parishes; that these are moulded into 515 livings, and that therefore each person has on an average the tithes and glebes of more than nine parishes; that this is not the worst, however, for that many of the livings are united, and that the whole 3,403 parishes are divided amongst less than 350 parsons; that of the 3,403 parishes there are only 139 that have parsonage-houses, so that there is now remaining only one parsonage-house to every 24 parishes, and only 465 that have any churches, or one church to seven parishes; and that even in these, residence of the incumbent, or even a curate, seldom takes place for any length of time; that the Church, as by law established, would seem to be merely the means of making out of the public resources, provision for certain families and persons; that of the four archbishops and eighteen bishops of the Irish Church, as by law established, there are, as your petitioner believes, fourteen who are, by blood or marriage, related to Peers; that a similar principle appears to your humble petitioner to prevail in the filling of the other dignities and the livings; and that therefore the Irish Church, as by law established, really does seem to your humble petitioner to exist for no purpose other than that of furnishing the Government with the means of bestowing largesses on the aristocracy.

That, though this must, as your petitioner presumes your Honourable House will believe, be a great evil, it is attended with evils still greater than itself; that to expect, in such a state of things, a willing payment of tithes and clerical dues, would be next to a trait of madness; that the tithes are often collected by the aid of a military force, and that bloodshed is not unfrequently a circumstance in the enterprise; that it is manifest that, if there were no military force kept up, there could be no tithes collected; and that, therefore, to the evil of the present application of the Irish Church revenues, is to be added the cost and all the other evils arising from the keeping up of a great standing army in Ireland; that, besides this army, there is kept on

military force ; we have seen the ministers of this Christian church compelled to forego their claims, or to see those claims enforced by the sword of the law, at least : frequently by the *literal* sword of the policeman or soldier ; and though these have hitherto triumphed in the horrible combat carried on for the purpose of upholding that, the legitimate object of which is to promote *peace on earth and good will amongst*

oot an armed, and sometimes, mounted police establishment, costing an immense sum annually ; that it is clear that neither army nor police would be wanted in Ireland, were it not for the existence of the Church Establishment, which the Catholics and Dissenters, who form six parts out of seven of the people, must naturally, and notoriously do, detest and abhor ; that, therefore, while the Irish Church, as by law established, appears to your humble petitioner to be kept up as a source for supplying Government with the means of bestowing largesses on the aristocracy, the army and police appear to him to be required solely for the purpose of giving efficiency and permanence to that supply.

That, hence arise, as your humble petitioner firmly believes, all the discontents, all the troubles, all the poverty, nakedness, hunger, all the human degradation in Ireland ; and this belief he founds upon facts which are undeniable.

That, when the Reformation laid its merciless hand on Ireland, that country, blessed with a soil and climate as good as any in the world, had 649 monasteries and other foundations of that nature ; that it had a church in every parish, instead of having, as now, one church, on an average, to seven parishes ; that it had then a priest in every parish, who relieved the poor and repaired the church out of the tithes ; that it had, in the monasteries and in the bishops' palaces, so many points whence the poor, the widow, the orphan, and the stranger, received relief ; and that it had (greater than all the rest) *unity of faith, glory to God with one voice, peace on earth, and good will towards men.*

That, alas ! your humble petitioner need not tell your Honourable House, that these have all, yea all, been swept away by the means made use of to introduce, establish, and uphold the Protestant hierarchy ; that these means are still in practice, and are, in productiveness of turmoil and misery, as active and efficient as ever ; and that, as long as this hierarchy shall continue to exist, these same means must, your petitioner is convinced, be employed constantly and with unabated vigour.

That, therefore, your humble petitioner prays that your Honourable House, proceeding upon the clear precedents set by former Parliaments, will be pleased to pass a law to repeal, abrogate, abolish, and render utterly frustrate and of no effect, the Protestant Church now established by law in Ireland ; that you will be pleased to cause a just distribution, in future, of the tithes and other revenues now received by that Church ; that, in this distribution, you will be pleased to cause to be made effectual provision for the relief of the poor ; and that you will be pleased to adopt, relative to the premises, such other measures as, in your wisdom, you shall deem to be meet.

And your petitioner will ever pray.

Barn-Elm, April 20, 1829.

Wm. COBBETT.

men, victory seems at last to begin to change sides ; the tithe-payers seem now to be becoming the victors, and we almost wish to call the parsons of the days of the savage Elizabeth up from their graves, that they may hear the cry of “persecution” now ringing through Ireland, from the lips of the Protestant parsons ! And, gentlemen, will you send to a reformed Parliament men who will suffer these scenes to continue ; men who, in order still to uphold this establishment, will consent to keep up an army in Ireland, costing three or four millions a year ; men who will consent to suffer this state of half-rebellion continually to exist, and who will suffer this one of the limbs of the kingdom to become paralyzed for all good, while it is rendered doubly strong for all sorts of evil : if you will consent ; if, either from listlessness, or from any motive or cause whatsoever, you can be prevailed upon to do this, the reform of the Parliament will be of no more use to you than any other empty and even inarticulate sound.

In England, we want only an abolition of the tithes, and an appropriation to public uses of the other revenues of the church ; because, here, the Protestant religion according to the rites and ceremonies of the church, is not only dominant in law, but in the hearts and tastes and habits of the people, who, for the far greater part, have been estranged from the church, only, by the gross neglect of the clergy. In many great towns this is not the case ; but when we are talking of measures to affect the whole nation, we must take the whole nation into view. Here, at any rate, the churches are still standing, and also the parsonage-houses, with the exception of a comparative few. Here there is a Protestant parson of some degree or other, who pretty constantly makes his appearance in every parish church ; but, in Ireland, five or six parishes, and sometimes nine or ten, have been moulded into one living ; and in some cases even these livings have been united under one rector or vicar. There, there has been such a shameful uniting and amalgamating, that scarcely any such thing as Protestant church service is to be seen, in many parts of the country ; there, in some parishes at least, scarcely a Protestant is to be found ; and, taking the whole island together, the best estimates state that there is but one Church Protestant to seven Catholics and Dissenters. This, therefore, is a very different affair from the Established Church in England.

Gentlemen, *for what purpose was this hierarchy established in Ireland ? Must it not have been for the purpose of causing*

the people of Ireland to be Church Protestants ? It is impossible that any government, in its senses, that any but tyrants, and mad tyrants too, would have given the immense revenues of the church of Ireland to the clergy of that church, unless in the confident expectation of seeing a large part of the people at least converted to the Protestant faith, and joining in the Protestant communion. Upon what other ground could any men but ruthless tyrants have bestowed upon Protestant parsons and bishops those enormous revenues, which have of late years enabled some of the bishops to leave at their death, each of them, upwards of 200,000*l.* sterling ?

Yet at the end of about 250 years, this work of conversion has proceeded so slowly, that this church has not now to number in its flocks a seventh part of the inhabitants of the people at most ; and, what is more, according to accounts which I have seen, and which I believe to be correct, its flocks are less numerous now than they were one hundred years ago. What pretence, therefore, is there for the upholding of this church, even if it could be upheld without any expense to the nation, without the assistance of any army or armed police, without any danger to the peace and safety of the kingdom, without any violence of any sort, and even without discontent, amongst any part of the people ? Even in that case, to uphold it would be an act of gross folly, as well as of crying injustice, but, under the present circumstances, to uphold it, and by the means now resorted to, for the purpose, is an act which posterity will certainly ascribe to nothing short of madness.

In England the case is very different ; but even here, whatever is done must be done at once : there must be no attempt at doing the thing bit by bit, such as suffering, for instance, the incumbents to enjoy their benefices to the end of their lives ; and I was very much surprised, the other day, to read in the report of a speech of Mr. O'Connell, a proposition to leave the benefices in the hands of several incumbents, as a "*vested interest*" to the end of their lives respectively. In the first place, this is consonant with no principle ; because on the same ground that this would be adopted, the Church has a right, or the patron has a right, to appoint *successors* to the present incumbents. There is no principle upon which you can take away the right of the patron, which is not equally good for taking away the right of the present incumbent. Besides which, the thing is wholly impracticable ; for to suppose that one parish will pay tithes,

while the neighbouring parish is exempted, and that too in virtue of the same law, is to suppose that which is morally, and almost physically impossible. Figure to yourselves (such a law having been passed) one parish having no tithes to pay, and all the parishes adjoining it constantly beseeching God to deliver them from their rector or vicar.

This, therefore, is what cannot be. Happen what else may, this is what cannot be. And, as to the injustice of at once ousting the present possessor of a living; what injustice is there that goes much beyond the injustice of taking all possibility of church preferment from those who have been educated for the purpose of becoming parsons? They, too, have a vested interest to a certain extent; but as in the case of the beer-bill, the expectations created by the laws and usages of the country, must be made to yield to that which is found to be the general good of the nation. But besides this, the working clergy of England would by no means be divested of anything that they can call their right. From the doctor who lives at Rome, with three livings and a prebend in England, and remains there for ten years, learning the Protestant religion from the Pope, and drawing away the tithes of three parishes, and a prebend to be spent in Italy; from such a one, certainly, all his revenues would be taken; but there would be three working clergymen, who would at least have parsonage-houses and glebes, and the fees of their several churches, besides that, which would never fail in England, competent and even generous contributions from their parishioners. In Ireland, the case would be different, but can the clergy of Ireland reasonably demand better treatment than that which was experienced by those whom they ousted at the Reformation? In defence of the Reformation people, it has recently been asserted that the secular Catholic clergy had the option of turning out, or becoming Protestant parsons; and what objection is there to giving the Protestant parsons of Ireland the same option now? You will say that this would be *dangerous*; but there would be very little danger if you took the tithes away from the parish. However, all the difficulties would be got rid of, without any one having to complain of injustice, if annuities for life were provided out of the land-tax for every man ousted from a living; and it would be to libel their reverences to suppose that they would ask for more, or accept of more, than was granted to the Catholic ecclesiastics, regular as well as secular, when they were ousted from the moieties.

teries and the parishes. The Government guaranteed to them, provided they remained quiet, and in the kingdom, forty shillings a year for life ; that is to say, *for/y pounds a year of the present money*, money being then just about twenty times as valuable as it is now. A very large part of these persons, and almost the whole of them, have estates in land, houses or otherwise ; for, though they cling to the law of Moses, as far as tithes is concerned, they by no means imitate the Levites, in abstaining from all share of inheritance in the land. In short they are a great body of private land-owners, and owners of all sorts of property ; and in dealings in the funds, and other such matters, there is scarcely a body of persons in the kingdom that exceed them in eagerness and acuteness. Loss they would experience, to be sure ; but that loss would not be ruinous, in one case out of a hundred ; and, besides, a man who has forty pounds a year sterling cannot be said to be ruined. He may be forced to take to work, to be sure, and bring up his children to work ; but it is very far from being certain, that the family would not be the happier for this, without its being possible to deny that it would be a great benefit to the nation present and future.

But, without *poor-laws*, even this abolition of the *hierarchy* in Ireland would not produce tranquillity in the country ; and what is more, it ought not to produce it, unless there be persons to contend that such an application ought to be made of the produce of a country, as to cause those who raise the produce, who create the produce, to experience periodical returns of hunger and starvation. There has been great talk of the evils of absenteeism, as it is called, and certainly very great are these evils ; but it is perfect nonsense to talk of putting an end to them, until the owners and occupiers of the land and the houses be compelled by law to leave a sufficiency of the produce for the destitute labourers. It is a natural process, and quite consistent with the happiness and prosperity of Ireland, that she should send to England and elsewhere that part of her produce which is necessary to obtain her clothing and other necessaries in exchange ; but it is mortally injurious to her, that a large part of her produce should be sent out of the country, and its amount paid to absentees, who expend that amount out of Ireland. This is a monstrous evil ; it is the great source of the misery of the Irish people ; and there is no remedy for it, but that of introducing and establishing the English *poor-law*, which would

withhold from the absentees that part which they now take away to the injury of the country.*

The right of the poor to receive relief, in case of need, has been so clearly established, that there needs no argument, upon this occasion, in support of it. The origin and intention of tithes were precisely the same in Ireland as in England. In a former lecture I had to show that the poor-laws in England were adopted to supply the place of that patrimony of the people which consisted of the revenues of the church. The act of Elizabeth was not passed till every other means had been tried in vain ; and that last resort was not adopted till it became manifest that rebellion would never cease till a regular, a legal, and a certain provision for the indigent poor had been made ; and if that provision had been extended to Ireland, it is very far from being certain that the church religion might not have become the religion of that country as well as of this. I say this, without any imputation against the sincerity of the Irish people, because the distribution of relief to the indigent constitutes a great part of the practice of the Catholic religion, and of all Christian religion ; and, as the clergy always have had a great hand in this distribution, it is natural to suppose that it must have given great weight to their teachings.

But the poor-law of Elizabeth was not extended to Ireland, and it never has been extended to Ireland ; and this has been one great cause, first, of all the sufferings which the Irish people have had to endure, and of all the discontents, disturbances, and rebellions, that have arisen out of those sufferings. If I be asked why the poor-laws were not extended to Ireland, my answer is, that they were not established in England till the forty-third year of the reign of Elizabeth ; and that they then arose out of the fear of those who had become possessed of the church-property, that the people would, in the end, take that property from them, unless a never-failing source of relief were established. Then, if it be asked, how the people of Ireland came not to make the same demand, the answer is, that in all probability they did make

* I have just read, with great surprise, a speech of Mr. O'Connell, recently delivered in Dublin, upon this very important subject. I could hardly believe my eyes as I read it. I have looked over the subsequent papers narrowly, and regret to observe, that it has not been disowned by him. I think it my duty to address a letter to him upon the subject, which letter I shall subjoin to these lectures.

the demand, but that the Government of England had the means of stifling their discontents, and of compelling them to live without poor-laws.

This is the true history of the matter: the want of poor-laws has been the great source of all the troubles and miseries of Ireland; and therefore it is reasonable to conclude, that, do what we will besides, Ireland never will become other than a burden to England, until this act of justice be done to its now miserable people. Authentic statements have repeatedly represented a part at least of the people of Ireland as in a state of perfect nakedness. This excessive misery may, indeed, be very rare; and I hope to God it is, but, about three years ago, an Irish member, a Mr. O'Brien, made a statement in the House of Commons, representing, not only children and men, but young women, as frequently seen in a state of actual nakedness; and, when the House seemed shocked at the description, he added to the feelings of horror, by asserting that the thing was so common as to excite neither wonder nor disgust. We have undoubted proof of many thousands of human beings in that country, who are frequently, at least once in a year or two, in such a state of misery, as to resort to that species of food which neither dog nor hog will accept of. We know that this could not be the case if poor-laws were established and enforced; and is it not the duty of the Government to adopt and enforce this remedy? Is it not a shame for any body of men to acknowledge, that they are the rulers of people reduced to such a state? Talk of allegiance, and talk of obedience to the laws! Allegiance is not due, where protection is not given; and who will say that these wretched people are under the protection of the Government? It is the interest, to be sure, in the end, for the rich of every community to take care that the poor be relieved; but men are sometimes blind to their own interest, when, to promote it, the performance of a burdensome duty is required. And, what is a Government for; for what reason does it exist; of what use is it to the nation; and, what right, in short, has it to be; unless it, in such cases, interfere, for the purpose of putting things to rights? It appears, upon the face of it, the interest of the poor, to take away the property of the rich, which, by a little combination, they are always able to effect. No one disputes that it is the duty of the Government to interfere, in this case: and why then is it not to interfere in compelling the rich to render to the poor that which is so clearly their

due? Upon the *squirearchy* of Ireland these arguments will, I am aware, be all thrown away; but, as the rest of the kingdom has always had the power to protect the *squirearchy* against the violences of the people, so I trust it will be able to protect the people against the graspings of that body of inexorable oppressors.

It remains for me to speak of that part of my proposition which contains, I must confess, a suggestion perfectly novel: I mean that part which proposes that the Parliament of the whole kingdom should hold its sessions, and the King hold his Court, in Ireland, once in every three years; in York, once in every three years; and in the city of Salisbury, once in every three years. With regard to this removal of the Court from London to York and to Salisbury, the object simply is, to put a stop to the swellings of the enormous *WEN*, and to place it under the process of gradual dispersion. When it is considered that that *WEN* and its environs now draw up to themselves, to be expended uselessly, more subsistence than is expended in the nine counties of England which stand first in the alphabet; when it is considered that there is more human food actually wasted in and about the *WEN*, actually sent down the common sewers, flung into the dust-holes, and otherwise destroyed, than would support all the people in one of the considerable counties; when I assure you that a very-well-informed and very great dealer in cheese and in bacon has assured me, that there is more cheese suffered to rot and more bacon sent to be melted down by the soap-boilers than, as he believes, is consumed in a county equal in population to Wiltshire; when you consider these things, and look at the people of the *WEN*, as useless consumers of food and of clothing, brought together by the unnatural means of taxation, you must agree with me, that a dispersion of this monstrous mass must take place, before the nation can again know anything worthy of the name of prosperity.

And we are by no means to leave the injury to morals and to public liberty, occasioned by this unnatural collection of human beings. Peel's *gendarmerie* police is a thing enough to make our grandfathers turn in their graves. Yet the prodigious creation of thieves and of prostitutes, coming from this collection, demands these frightful means to repress the disorders which are its natural consequence. Vices, at which our fathers would have shuddered with horror, are rendered familiar to the mind, by their frequency in this grand scene of

everything that is villainous. A great military force becomes necessary, in such a case, to prevent the destruction of life and the devastation of property. The murdering of human beings, as objects of sale ; and the murdering others, for the purpose of obtaining the teeth as a vendible commodity ; the receiving of the carcases, and of the teeth, with as little ceremony, and without any more horror, than the cutting-up butcher receives the carcase of a sheep, or than the toyman receives the bits of bone, obtained from the butcher or the Skinner ; these things, which, related in fabulous stories, would have filled our fathers with horror, now excite not the wonder of a day, in that scene of laziness and of all sorts of villainy, which, through a thousand channels, daily sends forth its corruptions, bodily as well as mental, to every part of this kingdom. And where is the man, then, who will hesitate a moment to applaud any measure which has a tendency, without any act of cruelty or injustice, to disperse this diabolical collection of infamy ?

It has been the policy of all wise legislators to prevent, as far as possible, the unnatural increase of the population of towns. The American Congress removed from the greatest cities in the Union to a place comparatively a village, and which it knew could not, from the nature of things, become much other than a village. It saw the injury that must arise from drawing to a great commercial city the taxes which would naturally be brought to it, by its being the seat of the Government. The separate States themselves, which have great cities in them, have long ago removed the seat of government far away from those great cities. From the city of New York it has been removed to Albany, a distance of 150 miles ; from the city of Philadelphia the seat of government was, long ago, removed to a mere village, about 200 miles further to the west. A great part of the business of the legislature, in both these cases, might have some connexion with these great cities ; but, sober men, who do their work by day-light, and have no Bellamy's boozing shop under their roof, thought it much better to put themselves out of the reach of those debaucheries, and of that bustle and hubbub, and of those temptations of all sorts, which great and opulent cities could not fail to cause to be of some degree of influence.

And why should the King not see the North of England, and the West of it ? Salisbury is in about the middle between Dover and Penzance ; and York may be very well considered

as the centre of the North of Great Britain. I should see no harm, for my part, in holding the court sometimes at Exeter also, and sometimes at Norwich. This used to be the fashion. Parliaments have been held at Northampton, and why should they not again? The presence of the King makes a court, and, as to the trouble that this would give the King, it must be a strange king indeed, and he must be very different from all other human beings, if the variety would not give him pleasure instead of harm. This is sheer nonsense, however; and as to the expense, suppose it to be fifty thousand pounds a year, in consequence of this moveable court, what is that, when compared to the immense advantages of it? amongst which advantages we must by no means omit the great addition of respect which it would bring to the kingly office, when the king came to be known to all his people, instead of being merely heard of, as running backward and forward between Windsor and St. James's, except when occasionally posted down to Brighton, and there lodged in a sort of *guinguette*, surrounded by swarms of keen-looking stock-jobbers, and their flaunting wives. When Cardinal Pole landed at Dover, on returning to England, after the persecution of Henry VIII. and his son, the historian of his life says that he was preceded by two thousand gentlemen of the county of Kent, who went before him on horseback. Ten thousand will ride before the King into York. And has any king of England, since the time of Elizabeth, experienced an honour like this? The very circumstance of his going to a particular place for the purpose of making the laws would add weight to those laws? and how much better would it be, and how much more honourable to the King, to be escorted to his parliament in this way, than to be drawn along, surrounded by guards, amongst the shoutings, though of hundreds of thousands, of people!

With regard to England, this which I here recommend would be greatly useful; it would be beneficial in all sorts of ways, besides that of dissipating the WEN. But, with regard to Ireland, the measure is absolutely necessary. Burke talked of orders of nobility being "*the chief defence of nations*;" and if he had lived to witness the hundreds of thousands of our money bestowed upon Wellington, he would, I dare say, have said that we had made a monstrous good bargain. This measure that I propose is, however, the chief defence of Ireland; the chief quieter of Ireland; the chief means of effecting, in reality, that union which now

exists only in name. The act of union was a most miserably bungling job, quite worthy of a pack of pettyfogging politicians. Any man of sense would at once have swept away the names of Great Britain and Ireland; have called the whole the Kingdom of England; have put all the counties in the whole kingdom upon the same footing; have made one and the same law prevail every-where, and would have made all conform to precisely the same authorities, in all civil and political affairs. Instead of this, a totally new name was given to the kingdom, and the sensible parliament graciously bestowed upon their sovereign a new and rigmarole title, taking from him at the same time one of his titles worn by his ancestors, and worn by them for four hundred years; making him cast behind him (from the motive of the hunted beaver) the title of the King of France; and making him at the same time, in quality I suppose of head of the Protestant Church, retain the title of "Defender of the Faith" of the Pope.

Never was so clumsy an affair as this; but it is not too late now to make a real union with Ireland. The meeting of the Parliament in Ireland would occasion twenty thousand English noblemen and gentlemen to go to Ireland, some one or other of whom would have his foot upon every square yard of the country in the course of six months. Let any one imagine the inevitable effects of this species of communication. The impudent Castlereagh, when he proposed to bring Irish militia to England, and send English militia to Ireland, pretended to believe that this *interchange of bayonets* would cause an *interchange of kindly feelings* between the people of the two countries. The kind fellow deserved a blow on the mouth when he uttered that at once empty and insolent sentiment; but, in the measure which I propose, we see the wise means of an interchange of kindly sentiments. Endless acts of benevolence would and must arise from the holding of the Court and the sitting of Parliament in Ireland. Ireland, with all its resources, would become well known to numerous persons of wealth going from England: and this is the way to introduce capital and improvement into Ireland; and not the raising of money in England by taxation, or by subscription, to be sent over to be pocketed by the agents, or to be doled out in gallons of potatoes and pounds of oatmeal. The presence of the Court and the Parliament would overawe petty tyranny. The King's Ministers would be there, to see the condition and

hear the grievances of his people; and the King and the Parliament would be there upon the spot to redress those grievances: then the two countries would become one in deed as well as in name: until then some one or other will always be able to stir up, in a great part of the people at any rate, a disposition to effect a separation from England; which, though it can never succeed, must always be attended with infinite mischief. Until this course be adopted, the Irish people, and not without some show of reason, will always be hankering after a distinct legislature. The adoption of this measure would put an end for ever to even the thought of such a thing; and as to the *expense* of holding a Court and a Parliament in Ireland, this is a pretty objection to start, when it now costs us four millions of pounds sterling a year to compel our fellow-subjects of Ireland to submit to what they, but too justly, deem our unjust predominance. This measure would almost instantly produce a total change in the manners of the people: the behaviour of English gentlemen would shame out of fashion the brutal treatment of the working people by the *squirearchy*: it would introduce English agriculture, English plantations, English orchards and gardens; and the making of bread and the cooking of meat, and the brewing of beer, and the wearing of clean and decent clothes, would very soon supplant the use of the wretched potatoes, the whiskey can, and the rags half-sufficient to cover their nakedness.

Thus, gentlemen, I conclude the statements and the reasonings to which you have been so indulgent during these six evenings, to lend an ear in support of the fourteen propositions which I have had the honour to submit to the inhabitants, and particularly to the future electors of this town, so famed throughout all the world for the productions of its ingenuity and industry. As I observed once before, I am not here for the purposes of election canvassing; I am not here for the purpose of asking any man or any body of men for their votes; but having been invited to become a candidate for this great town, I thought it my duty to come and fully to express, in the presence of its inhabitants, the conditions upon which alone I would consent to stand in that capacity. Having no right to prescribe to you, gentlemen, or to any other body of electors, that which you ought to do, I have not, I trust, shown myself disposed to be guilty of that arrogance. But having a right to prescribe to myself the line of conduct that I am to pursue; and being

thoroughly convinced that, unless the measures which you have permitted me to describe to you be adopted, a reformed Parliament will be no better than a boroughmonger Parliament, I am resolved not to be a member of such Parliament unless those who send me thither pledge themselves distinctly to support me to their utmost in my endeavours to cause those measures to be adopted. If you do this, gentlemen, great indeed will be the glory which you will confer upon me ; and, on the other hand, if neither you nor any other body of electors do this, much greater satisfaction shall I derive from remaining engaged in the humble pursuits which have hitherto been the delight of my life.

TO MR. O'CONNELL,

ON HIS SPEECH AGAINST THE PROPOSITION FOR ESTABLISHING POOR-LAWS IN IRELAND.

At Mr. Johnson's, Lime Place, Manchester, 14th January, 1829.
SIR,

WITH very great surprise (to give the mildest term to my feeling on the occasion) I have read, in the MORNING CHRONICLE of the 7th instant, a publication purporting to be the report of *a speech* made by you at a meeting of the NATIONAL POLITICAL UNION, held in Dublin on the 4th of this same month. The speech is stated to have been made in consequence of a motion by MR. JOHN REYNOLDS, for the appointment of a committee to deliberate on the subject of POOR LAWS FOR IRELAND. Having long been convinced that the withholding from Ireland of these laws, at the time when they were given to England, was the *original sin* in the misrule of Ireland, and that it has been the greatest of all the causes of the immeasurable distance between the manners, the habits, and the condition, of the working classes of the two countries; having seen that that *Catholic Emancipation*, which was, according to your expectations, so frequently, so eloquently, and so confidently expressed, to restore harmony and happiness to Ireland, has been far indeed from producing any such effects; being more fully than ever convinced that there never can be peace in Ireland, and that there never can be any security, or chance of security, against those periodical returns of starvation in Ireland, the bare thought of which ought to make an English, and

more especially an Irish legislator ashamed to show his face amongst mortals of common humanity ; remembering that Mr. GRATTAN, that Dr. DOYLE, and that YOU YOURSELF, have been the advocates of this remedy for the sufferings of your unhappy country, you, I am sure, will not wonder that, in reading the report of the speech to which I have alluded, my feeling was such as to be very inadequately described by the word *surprise* ; but you would wonder, I trust, and I am sure that my readers would wonder, if I were not to give *an answer to that speech*. This I shall now do with all that respect towards you which is due to you on account of your laudable and able exertions during the two last sessions of Parliament ; and, in order that the public may have the arguments and facts of both sides of the question fairly before them, I will first insert the above-mentioned report of your speech :

Mr. O'CONNELL rose amid loud cheers. I rise, he said, to second the motion for a Committee. With many of the principles laid down by Mr. Reynolds I entirely concur. I believe he has exaggerated the wealth of the Established Church—but then it is enormously great, and almost defies exaggeration. The claim which the poor have upon that wealth is obvious. One-third of it originally belonged to the poor, and they have been *flaching* from the poor by having kept from them that one-third. (Hear.) I concur also with Mr. Reynolds in what he has said of the generosity of the English *people*. (Hear.) Their generosity towards this country in money gifts has been most laudable, and I only wish that they had equally distinguished themselves for their *political charity*. (Hear.) We have got from *them* three or four hundred thousand pounds for our beggars, and they have been three or four centuries *making beggars of us*. Jack-the-Giant-Killer was distinguished for making giants first and then slaying them ; it is thus the English have acted towards the Irish—they have made beggars of them first, and then relieved them. (Hear, hear, hear.) Though I concur in the expression of my gratitude to those who have subscribed to the relief of the Irish poor, so must I also give expression to my abhorrence of those who have *made a rich country poor*, and have *placed a starving population in the midst of abundance*. (Hear, and cheers.) Though I am most ready to second the motion for a Committee upon this subject, I cannot but *start back with horror* at the proposal of *poor-laws being introduced into Ireland*. I know that a great case is made for them in the misery of the people, and I was myself even ready to plunge into the Curtian gulf, where eventually we might be swallowed up, in the hope that we could for the time be able to relieve the distresses of the poor. I have thought upon this subject by day—I have mused upon it by night—it has been the *last thought that visited my pillow* before I closed my eyes to sleep—and it has been the *benefit of my morning meditations* ; and the result to which I have come is this, that it would be *impossible to introduce the poor-laws here without enslaving and degrading the poor*. The poor themselves, I think, would suffer most from a poor-law. When people talk of an amelioration of the English system, I ask of them to point it out, for I never yet met a man who was able to discover

it. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) I abhor any *interference with the rate of wages*, especially in an agricultural country, and this is one of those things which frighten me about the introduction of the poor-laws here. What kind of poor-law is it that is wanting? If it be one for the support of *the sick and the maimed*, I go to the full extent with those who support such a poor-law. I say that the state is bound to make provision for those who are afflicted with *sickness* or *disease*; but there it is our duty *to stop*. There is no danger of encouraging sickness to enable a man to get into an infirmary, nor will any man break his leg in order that he may have a claim upon the charity of his neighbour. Let me be understood—all claims arising from *disease*, *sickness*, or *casually*, should be provided for by the state, and to that extent I go with those who are advocates for poor-laws. One-third of that which is now in the hands of the clergy, being given to its legal destination, would be fully sufficient to defray all such demands upon charity. (Hear.) Even at present there is *scarcely a village in Ireland* that has not a *dispensary*, nor any county town without its *hospital*, and if these be not sufficient, the *legislature* is *bound* to make provision for them. (Hear.) Go beyond that, and what do you do? Are you to take care of the *aged*? Do you not, by doing so, remove from the individual the *necessity of providing for old age*—do you not encourage him to go to the dram-shop, and lay out his sixpence upon his animal gratification, rather than of *hoarding for the day of want*? Do you not take from *industry* its *incentive*, and from *providence* its best guard? (Hear.) If I were, as my enemies represent me to be, one who was looking solely to popularity, and not to serve my country, what more fitting theme could I select than that of the poor-laws? What more popular topic could I possibly adopt? (Hear.) I feel, however, that it is the duty of a humane and a conscientious man to express candidly his opinion upon a topic so deeply interesting and important to his fellow-countrymen. (Hear.) I say, that if you make a provision for *old age*, you take away the great stimulant to industry and economy in youth. You do another thing—what is to become of the *aged father and mother*—they lose the solace and the *affectionate care of the son*, and the *tender attentions of the daughter*, the moment you say to them that a *legal provision* for their support is procured. You turn the father and the mother *out to the parish*, or you thrust them into the solitary, the cold, and the wretched poor-house—there, in the *naked cell*, sufficient to *chill the human breast*, you leave the expiring victims of *your mistaken humanity*. (Hear, hear.) But think not that you have a *compulsory provision for the aged alone*; if you go thus far, you are bound also to provide for the *hardy workman*, who cannot procure labour, and *who must not be left to starve*. The man with a good appetite and willing hands, but who has no work, you must include him also. It was not *at first intended*, I believe, to include this class amongst those to be provided for by the poor-laws; but it was found that they could not be included, and the moment that principle is adopted, the rich parish would be obliged to provide for all the poor who might claim relief from it, and in a short time that *parish would be swamped* with the number of claimants upon it. You cannot say to the city of Dublin that it should have a mendicity one-fourth the size of the metropolis—that every man who sought relief there should obtain it, and the citizens be obliged to pay the expense of supporting them. And yet, how are you to *discriminate*, unless you make a *law of settlement*, one *great instrument of*

oppression against the English poor. One of the means of settlement in England is by birth; there is none less likely to be subject to imposition, and yet none is made a greater instrument of oppression. The moment that it appears a *poor woman* is in a state of pregnancy, she is immediately made an object for *persecution*, and a notice to quit is served by the *landlord* on the wretched hovel that the prolific mother inhabits. The *landlord*, in fact, is compelled by the *vestry* to be guilty of this persecution. Another means of settlement in a parish is by living there for one year; and the consequence is, that engagements are made with labourers for only *eleven months*, and they are obliged to be *one month idle* before they can expect a renewal of work in the same parish. Another bad consequence of that law is, that it prevents the circulation of *free labour*, and obliges every man to stick to his parish. The poor-laws, too, take from a man a *direct interest in being industrious*. The motives to labour are present subsistence and future support. Take these two away, and you deprive a man of two great stimulants to labour. (Hear, hear, hear.) Besides, the poor-laws compel those dependent upon them for support to work—but in what manner? The labourers are *let out by the parish at half wages*, and then these half-workmen come in competition with the regular labourers. The *farmer* will tell the regular labourer, who demands three shillings a day, that he will give him but two shillings; for if he does not choose to take that, he will get those who he is ready to admit are inferior workmen for one shilling, and thus the good labourer is necessarily made poor. (Hear, hear.) Have I not seen, in Shrewsbury, for instance, placards on which were inscribed, “*Vagrants and Irish labourers whipped out of the town?*” Mr. Sturges Bourne made an *improvement in the law in this respect*, for he provided that after the Irish labourer was *whipped*, he should be sent home. (Hear.) These laws are necessarily called *cruel laws*, for they make charity itself the subject of taxation. They create in a man’s mind something of the sensation that is felt upon paying the wide-street or grand-jury cess. (Laughter.) They make, too, one man abundantly charitable, by *putting his hand into the pockets of another*—and to do what? to keep the poor at the lowest rate of maintenance. It is well known that in many parishes in England the poor are *farmed out* to be provided for at the lowest possible expence. The man who takes the care of them underfeeds them, in order that he may make a profit on them. Not only is the providing of food for them hired out, but apothecaries to supply them with medicines are hired also—men whose interest it is that the sick poor should die as soon as possible, in order that they may be at the less expence for medicines for them. (Hear.) For an obvious reason I do not enter into the horrors of this *demoralising system respecting females*; it is sufficient for me to say, that the *more vicious a female is, the more objects* has she to *make her selection from*, either to pay *forty pounds*, or to marry her. (Hear, hear.) It is sufficient to say of the system, that clergymen of the Established Church of England have sworn, that, amongst the poorer classes, out of every twenty women they married, *nineteen were in a state of pregnancy*. (Hear, hear.) What do we see as the consequence of the *poor-laws* in England? The country is in a *blaze from north to south*; the agricultural labourers there are destroying the property of their employers. (Hear.) I have now sat in three parliaments, and I have heard in each of these members state that these laws created a great deal of misery and distress.

But then it may be said that these laws can be ameliorated. How will you ameliorate them? What part of the English poor-laws will you shut out? How will Mr. Reynolds improve these laws? All the *ingenuity of Committee after Committee* that has sat respecting these laws has been exercised in vain, and has been unable to discover any *effective amelioration*. (Hear, hear.) One feature of the poor-laws is, that it *makes slaves of the poorer classes*; it makes them the slaves of the overseers, and destroys completely their character for independence. I prefer the *wild merriment* of the Irishman to the *half-sulky, half-miserable tones* of the *English slave* to poor laws. The Irishman *certainly has his distresses*, but then he has *his hopes*; he endures much misery; but then he *entertains expectations of redress*. (Hear, hear, and cheers.) Let the question of poor-laws stand over, till we see if justice will be done to us *by England*, upon the *question of reform*. I have often said, that if a *just reform bill* were given to Ireland, I would *try the experiment with it*; but if they do not give a *just reform bill*, then I shall want to introduce a poor-law for Ireland *by repealing the Union*. (Hear, and loud cheers.) Mr. O'Connell concluded by requesting that their exertions should not be interfered with by the *poor-law question*, in looking for a substantial *plan of reform*, and if that were refused, in seeking for a resource and a *remedy for a bad reform bill*. The hon. Gentleman sat down amid loud cheers.

Sir, I do not overlook the great *cheering* which this speech appears to have called forth from your Dublin audience; but when I recollect the still more noisy cheering drawn forth in another place by the DAWSONS and others, when they so unjustly, and in a manner so senseless, assailed you, I am by no means disheartened by this vast quantity of cheering; which I am disposed to ascribe, not to any folly, and still less to any perverseness, but rather to that "*wild merriment*," which, towards the close of your speech, you are pleased to describe as characteristic of your countrymen, and on which you appear to set so high a value.

Upon a careful perusal of this speech, I have no hesitation in saying, that the far greater part of your *facts*, as they stand here, are founded in error; and that the whole of your arguments are fallacious; and these assertions I think myself bound to prove; not by any general statement or reasoning; but, in the first place, point by point, as your facts and arguments lie before me. I might, if I chose to pursue that course, insist, that with regard to your *opinions*, they ought to be viewed in conjunction with, and estimated according to, the tried value of many of your former opinions. I might, if I chose that course, meet the imposing assurance, that you "*have thought of this subject by day, have mused upon it by night, and have given it the benefit of your morning meditations*;" I might, if I chose, and with perfect fairness, meet this formidable preamble

by asking you, whether you had not thought by day, mused by night, and meditated in the morning, on the *measure for disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders*, before you became the very first man to suggest that measure to the two Houses of Parliament, as being a measure necessary to the *fair representation of Ireland*; and whether, in less than twenty-four months from the date of the suggestion, you did not, before the face of these forty-shilling freeholders, *beg their pardon, and the pardon of Almighty God*, for having entertained a thought of their disfranchisement? Passing over the "*golden chain*," by which you proposed to *bind* the Catholic priests to the Protestant Government and *hierarchy*; passing over this and many other such errors, and confining myself within the forty-shilling freeholder, error, might I not if I chose, express a confident hope; nay, presume and almost conclude, that you are not less in error now, when you so boldly call ENGLISHMEN, in direct terms, and, by inference, the AMERICANS, the *slaves* of the poor-laws?

I might, with perfect fairness, do this, and perhaps to the entire satisfaction of the greater part of my readers; but I will evade nothing; will consider nothing coming from you as unworthy of serious notice; and will, therefore, agreeably to my promise, answer your speech point by point.

Deferring, till by-and-by, my notice of your charge against the Protestant hierarchy, of having "*filched*" from the poor of Ireland the amount of their third of the tithes, I begin with your charge against the "*English people*" of having "*made the Irish people poor*." We will cast aside your "*gratitude*" towards the former, as a fit companion for the *mutual good-will* between the two countries, which this charge of yours is so manifestly intended to inspire and keep alive; we will cast these aside; but, since you so positively assert that we, the many-headed Jack-the-Giant-Killer, have made your countrymen *poor*, we may surely be allowed the liberty to ask you to name the *time* when they *were rich*. When A is accused of having stolen the property of B, it is incumbent on B to prove that he *ever had* the property. Yours being, as to this matter, bare allegation without proof of previous possession, we need not remind you, how you, being in such a case counsel for the accused, would scoff the accuser out of court. We will not scoff you out of court; we will give you further time for "*thought, musing, and meditation*"; and will even aid these cool and candid operations of your mind by suggestions of our own. You say that the "*English people*" have been *three or four*

centuries engaged in the work of making the Irish people beggars. You doubtless use the words *English people* instead of *English Government*, not only from a love of *justice*, but from an amiable desire to promote the good-will and harmony between the English and the Irish. But, granted that it is the English *people*, what have they *done* to make the Irish people *poor*? Three or four centuries! "An inch is a trifle in a man's nose;" and with you orators *a century*, more or less, is not worth stopping about; it is a mere splitting of straws. These "centuries" could, however, hardly have fairly begun *above thirty-two years ago*; for then you had a "domestic legislature," and a right good one it was without doubt, for you *want it back again!* What, however, even going back to the conquest, have the English people *done* to make the Irish *poor*? *Conquered the country*, and parcelled out its lands amongst Englishmen. There! Take it in its fullest extent: and what have they done to the Irish, to a tenth part of the amount of *what the Normans did to them*? Yet they have survived it; they have overcome conquest by their industry and love of country: they soon made the conquerors proud to be considered part of themselves; and they never sat brooding in sloth and filth over the fabulous dignities and splendour and possessions of their forefathers. It is, therefore, not perverseness, but sheer nonsense, to talk of wrongs which the Irish experienced from *that cause*. The English imposed the *Protestant hierarchy* upon the Irish: Very unjust, but having no tendency to make them *poor*, any more than the same imposition *upon themselves*; and it has been *heavier* upon themselves; for they *have* always had to yield *greater tithes* than the Irish. They *forbade the open profession of their religion*, on pain of exclusion from civil and political power. Unjust as well as foolish; but the same is done to the Quakers every-where; and that does not make them *poor* and *ragged*; and now, when the Irish have civil and political power, they are *poorer than ever!* Have the English people *ever taxed* the Irish? We will see about that by-and-by, when we come to talk of the *reform* that *you are seeking*. How then have the "*English people*" made the Irish people *poor*? They have, indeed, *suffered* them to be *made poor*, by *not compelling the owners of the land in Ireland to pay poor-rates*. This is their great sin towards the Irish people; and now, when they seem resolved to do right in this respect, and to make reparation for the wrong, as far as they can, *you step in with erroneous facts and fallacious arguments to induce the Irish to believe that that long-withheld*

good is *an evil!* The fact is, however, that the English *people* have never had any hand in causing the wrongs and misery endured by the Irish people. The wrongs and this misery, as far as they have been caused by misrule, have been inflicted by that "band of oligarchs," to whom you have so often, so recently, and so justly ascribed them, and amongst whom your *native* oligarchs have been the very, very worst. The English *people* have always commiserated the sufferings of the Irish; and this feeling has always been most conspicuous, too, amongst the *Church-of-England people*. The people of England have been wronged by the injustice of the oligarchs as much as, or more than, the Irish have; for they have had *to pay* for keeping the Irish people in submission to those who refused to give them poor-laws, and who thereby reduced them to starvation. If this be *not* the true state of the matter, you have the means of proving the contrary; and if this be the true state of the matter, let the reader characterize *your charge against the English people of having made the Irish people poor.*

From this general charge against the people of England, which it was necessary to place in its true light, I come to your several charges against "English poor-laws," which might, perhaps, have experienced from you some little mitigation of censure, if you had, by any accident, happened to know that they were, too, *American* poor-laws, as you will (to your indignant surprise, I dare say) learn more circumstantially by-and-by. The first thing that you urge against our poor-laws is, that they "interfere with wages," and that this is one of the things that "frightens" you. As an Irish lawyer, you might be excused for ignorance of these laws, but not for a *misrepresentation of them*: and here we have a mere *fact* to deal with, and have the written proof at hand. To the original poor-law of the 43rd of Elizabeth, many acts have been added, relating to the relief and management of the poor; and, in no one of these acts, is there any authority given to anybody to *interfere with the wages* of labour, nor is there in any of them, nor in the original law itself, any countenance given to any such interference. So that it appears that you have been frightened by the workings of your own imagination. That, in many cases, the magistrates in settling the amount of relief, have taken the amount of *the wages of the party into view*; and that they have, in most cases, made the relief too small in proportion to the wages; and that, in many cases, the employers of farm-labourers have, in order to ease themselves at the expense of gentlemen and tradespeople, given the labourers *less in wages*

and *more* in poor-rates ; all this is true enough, and it certainly involves a misapplication of the powers of the poor-laws ; but what charge does this imply *against the poor-laws themselves* ? And, after all, what is this evil ? what does this crooking-working of self-interest amount to, compared with the frightful evil of leaving thousands to perish with hunger and cold for want of legal and sure relief ?

For "*sick and maimed*," however, *you* would, it seems, have relief provided by "*the State*." It is impossible to know what *you* mean by *the State* ; but at any rate, *you* would have *them* provided for by a compulsory assessment of some sort ; but not *the aged*, nor *the hale*, though these latter be without work, and without the means of obtaining food or raiment ; and, *you* add, that *you* "*believe*" that "*it was not, at first*, intended by the poor-laws to provide for the wants of this class." When *a lawyer* is speaking of an *act of Parliament*, and especially when its tendency is the subject matter of his discourse, he should not "*believe*" anything about its provisions ; and, before *you* pronounced so decided a condemnation of this, the greatest of all our acts of Parliament, which, in fact, furnishes a great part of the machinery for carrying on all our internal affairs, and which raises and disposes of more than seven millions of pounds sterling in a year in England and Wales ; before *you* so boldly condemned this great act, *your* mind ought to have had left in it not the smallest ground for *belief* respecting the provisions. This *belief* is, however, erroneous ; for the act *does* provide, and it clearly *intends* to provide, for this class of persons ; and, if it had not provided for them, it would have been nugatory at the time ; and if they were not provided for now, an army of five hundred thousand men would not uphold the Government of England for a month ! I thank God, that it does provide for their wants ; I thank God, that it gives them *a right* to relief, and that *they know* and *feel* it. It is the bond of peace ; it is the cement of English society ; and accursed be all those who would enfeeble it !

But, "*the sick and maimed*," *you* would have *the state* provide for these ; *but not for the aged* ; and if there be, in "*almost every village* of Ireland, *a dispensary*, and in every county town *an hospital*," there is provision already made for the "*sick and maimed* ;" so that the Irish poor have all that *you* want them to have ! Glad to know it ! It certainly is *news* to me. I wish it may be *true* ! Yet there must want a "*dispensary*" of food and clothing, or else we have been told *most monstrous lies* about the people eating stinking

shell-fish, sea-weed, and nettles, and about whole parishes receiving the *extremeunction* preparatory to death from starvation, and about whole families of females being in a state of *complete nakedness*; and our own eyes must deceive us, and mine especially must deceive me, when I think I see, every month of my life, hundreds of squalid creatures tramping into London, by my door, without shoes, stockings, or shirts, with nothing on the head worthy of the name of hat, and with rags hardly sufficient to hide the nakedness of their bodies! However, for the *aged* you will have *no provision*. And *why*? What is your *reason* for this? For, upon the face of the proposition, it does seem to be dictated by anything but *that tenderness* which you are constantly expressing towards the Irish people. Your reasons are these: 1. That, by making provision for the destitute in old age, you take away the great inducement to *industry and frugality in the days of youth*; and, 2. That you deprive the *aged parents of the aid of their children*, who, seeing a provision for them in the poor-house, will leave them to go to perish in its "*naked cells*." As to the first of these reasons, it would be equally good against a provision for the "*sick and maimed*," if they *happened to be old*. But are *all the labouring people able*, in youth, to lay by something for old age? It is the decree of God that the human race shall be sustained by labour; nine-tenths of labour is painful in some degree; very few of the human race will encounter pain, but from *necessity*; and none will, therefore, seldom encounter more of this pain than is demanded by their *present wants*. To call upon men who are engaged in pursuits *not bodily painful*, to lay by, in their youth, for the days of old age, is reasonable and just; but to call upon the hard-working man to do this is neither. If he do it (and, in *England*, he, to a great extent, does it, in *five cases out of six*, after all); if he do it, where is the tongue or pen to speak the praise that is his due! But if he have not, from *whatever cause*, been able to do it, or have not done it, he has a *clear right* to a provision in old age: he has spent his life and worn out his strength in the service of the community; and that reluctance which every man naturally feels to ask another for something, is a sufficient security against his being *lazy and prodigal* in his youth, upon *a cool calculation* of the *benefit* of parochial provision in his old age. With regard to your second objection; namely, that by making a provision for old age, you deprive the *indigent parents of the aid of their children*, who, seeing the "*naked cell*" provided for them, will *let them go to it*;

with regard to this matter, you appear to regard the Irish people as being capable of setting at defiance, and as likely to set at defiance, not only the laws of *nature*, but also the express and a hundred-times-repeated laws of *God*. No very high compliment to your countrymen! No very strong proof of the sincerity of your belief in that "*generosity*," that "*active and practical compassion for the poor*," and that "*deep sense of religion*" which we shall presently see you ascribing to them! But you, as a *lawyer*, might have told them one thing, and since you did not do it, I will; and that is, that if neither the laws of nature nor those of *God* could induce them so far to honour their father and their mother as to keep them from the poor-house, *the poor-laws would compel them to do it*, they having *the ability*; and if they *have not the ability*, how can poor-laws deprive the parents of their aid? As a *lawyer*, you ought to have known that those poor-laws which you so vehemently decry, compel all persons, being able to do it, to maintain their indigent *fathers, mothers, grandfathers, grandmothers, children, and grand-children*. This is what you ought to have told your Dublin audience, though it might have cost you the loss of some of those valuable *cheers*, which you obtained by this suppression of the *truth*, and by supplying its place with the "*naked cell*," existing no-where but in your imagination. Either you *did not know the law* as to this matter, or you *did know it*. If the *former*, you ought to have known it before you made this speech; and if the *latter*, I decline to characterize your conduct.

But, Sir, in your anxious haste to narrow the effect of poor-laws, you forgot that, besides the sick, the maimed, and the aged, there were some other parties who are, however, by no means overlooked in that *HOLY WRIT*, for not believing in which we shall presently find you condamning the "*infidel*" to be dealt with in a way "*to supersede all legal punishment*"; namely, the *widow*, the *orphan*, and the *stranger*. In your comprehensive scheme of "*active and practical compassion for the poor*," you will make *no provision for these!* The English poor-laws, which do not cry, "*Lord! Lord!*" but which *do his will*, make provision for them all; and well, indeed, is it that they do, or thousands upon thousands of *Irishmen* would, at this very moment, be dying and lying dead from starvation; and that, too, if your doctrine be sound, without having the smallest ground for accusing the English of injustice or cruelty.

The *law of settlement* you represent as an *instrument of*

oppression. Your story about yearly servants being obliged to be *one month* out of employ, in order to prevent them from gaining a settlement, is mere romance, the thing being *impossible*; because the whole of the business in all the farm-houses in the country must, in that case, be suspended for *a month*; and, to believe that this can take place, you must know about English farming as little as, for your sake, I hope you know about our poor-laws. In some cases, for the reason here assigned, the master will hire the servant for some days less than a year; but it much oftener happens that this sort of bargain is from the wish of the servant, who does not, in general, wish to "*lose his parish*;" and, at this moment I have a country-boy living with me, whose mother would not consent to his coming unless the bargain was such as not to cause him "*to lose his parish*." This, at once, shows the light in which the *working people* view the poor-laws. Instead of deeming them a bond of "*slavery*," as you choose to represent them, they deem them the *title of their right* to their patrimony. And with regard to the compelling of married people to *stick to their parishes*, it is a great good, instead of being an evil; it being evident that people in that state of life will be, in all respects, more careful of their characters, and will be more likely to be of better behaviour, if resident amongst those who know them, than if wandering about from place to place. If they quit their parishes, and become chargeable to another, or manifestly likely to be so, the poor-laws expose them not to oppression, but consider them in the light of "*the stranger*," relieve them if necessary, and take them home to their parish. Well would it have been, Sir, for the thousands of poor *forty-shilling freeholders of Ireland*, whom the "*LIBERATOR*" saw driven off the estates, as the price of that "*Emancipation*" which gave him a seat in Parliament; well would it have been for these poor sacrificed creatures, if there had been an English law of *settlement* to compel the savage landlords to keep them; and in that case, indeed, they would never have been driven off the estates, and, finally, as they were, exposed to all the horrors of famine and pestilence.

We now come to two assertions, which, from their character, and from one and the same term being applicable to both, ought not, for a moment, to be separated; namely, 1. That, in the town of SHREWSBURY, *you saw placards*, on which were inscribed the words, "*VAGRANTS and Irish LABOUR.*

"ERS whipped out of the town;" and, 2. That "Mr. STURGES BOURNE made an improvement in the law; for he provided that, after the IRISH LABOURER was whipped, he should be sent home." As you positively assert that you saw these placards at SHREWSBURY, I must suppose that SHREWSBURY is in Ireland; for I am sure you never saw such a placard in *England*. This town is certainly in Tipperary or Connaught, or something: at any rate, I assert that you never saw it in *an English town*. As to the second of this couple of assertions; FIRST, in no bill ever brought in by STURGES BOURNE is there one single word about "*Irish labourers*," and in no law that is now in existence, or that ever was in existence, is there any provision for, or one word about, the *whipping of Irish labourers*. Therefore had you not said that the matter of this speech was the fruit of your "*daily thoughts, nightly musings, and morning meditations*," I should have concluded that it was the subject of *a dream*, or an effusion, emanating from an exhilarating draught at Bellamy's.

But suppose we were to disregard the sufferings of the Irish *here*; were to let them die in the streets, instead of *sending them home*, we should only be acting upon *your own principle*; for you propose to leave *the stranger*, even in his own country, without any relief at all. But how can you, Sir, reconcile with your profession of a desire to see the two countries cordially united; how can you reconcile with this profession this assertion, that there is a law, in *England*, authorising *the whipping of Irish labourers before they be sent home*? I hope that some one has told you the story, and that want of time prevented you from looking after *this law*. The falsehood being so entire, it not having a shadow of truth to give it countenance, I cannot help hoping that this is the case. I see, in the course of the year, many hundreds of them going off to Bristol in very commodious caravans, drawn by good horses, smoking their pipes, and full of your admired "*wild merriment*." Never are they whipped, and there is no law for whipping them, in any case, in which an Englishman would not be whipped.

Equally destitute of truth is the assertion, that "clergymen of the Church of England have sworn, that, out of every twenty women of the poorer classes, that were married by them, nineteen were pregnant." No clergyman in *England* ever swore this, and no one ever said it. The tale is a gross misrepresentation of evidence given before a committee

of the House of Commons in 1828, when the overseer of PELHAM, in HERTFORDSHIRE, told the committee, that nearly the whole of the young women were pregnant before they were married ; because, being *too poor to pay the expenses of the wedding*, they generally put it off, till the parish was glad to pay for it. But was this the fault of the poor-laws ? No ; but, as was shown by the same evidence, the *fault of the taxes*, which made the farmers unable to pay the labourers a sufficiency of wages, and that this latter made the labourers so poor, that they were unable to get married before the pregnancy became obvious to the parish-officers. Thus the poor-laws, instead of being the *cause of this shame* to the young people, actually came in and prevented the children from being born out of wedlock.

The same may be said of your statements relative to the letting out of the English labourers to hire to the highest bidder, and of all the other degrading measures adopted by overseers. They are *abuses* of the poor-laws, and not evils *created* by the poor-laws : they have arisen out of *recent alterations* in those laws, and not out of those laws themselves, as is clear from the fact, that those laws existed for about two hundred years before any of these evils and oppressions were ever heard of.

As to the *farming of the poor*, supposing it to be done upon just principles, what is it more than *putting children to be boarded by the year* ? If care be taken that the contractor do what he ought to do, there is nothing either unjust or degrading in this ; and if he do not do his duty, and the poor people complain, the payers of the rates have no interest, and can have no inclination to uphold him in his wrong-doing. So that this is a perfectly futile objection to poor-laws, of which, however, this species of contract forms no essential part.

Your next statement is, that "*in consequence of the poor-laws, the FIRES are now blazing in England, from north to south.*" The cause of these fires is well known ; it is openly avowed, it is specific ; and it is, that the farmers *do not give the labourers so much wages as they say they ought to have*. This is notoriously the cause. In many cases the *fires* have stopped when the wages have been *raised* ; and have begun again when the wages have been *lowered*. This has, indeed, been the case all over the country : and, in the face of these well-known facts, considering also that the poor-laws have existed about two hundred and forty years, and never produced such effects before, it required, certainly, nothing short of a *Dublin audience* to embolden you to describe the *FIRES* as "*a conse-*

quence of the poor-laws ;" after which, who need to wonder if you were to ascribe the national debt and the cholera morbus to the poor-laws ?

You have known " committee after committee sit in vain, to discover some way of making an *effective amelioration* in "the poor-laws." Have you, indeed ! and so have I too. But that may be an argument *in favour* of the poor-laws. **LORD COKE** said, that " **MAGNA CHARTA** was too *strong a fellow* to be overcome by puny acts of Parliament :" and the same may be said of Old Betsy's poor-law. But, do you know what they mean by "*amelioration*" ? I will tell you : *taking away the relief*. This is what they have been trying at for about twenty years. But they find the law " *too strong a fellow* " for them. It is the **Magna Charta** of the working people ; it is written in their hearts ; the writing descends from the heart of the father to that of the son ; and God forbid that it should ever be effaced ; for, if ever that day come, English society and English manners and English happiness will all be effaced along with it, and the world will lose the example of a working-people, such as it never had in any other country upon earth.

Now, Sir, before I come to your general and sweeping denunciations against the English poor-laws, let me, in finishing these particular assertions and arguments, just put under your eyes one remaining assertion: it is this: " Apothecaries to supply " the poor with medicines are *hired*, whose *interest* it is, that " the sick poor *should die as soon as possible*, in order that " they may be at the *less expense for medicines*." This, too, was the result of your " thoughts by day, your musings by night, and your morning meditations," was it ? If you, Sir, can now again see this your insinuation upon paper, and not change colour, anything addressed to you, though by a pen a million times as eloquent as mine, must be wholly thrown away.

Leaving you to consider of, to think, muse, and meditate on, the figure you make before Englishmen, with this insinuation on your lips, I now come to your sweeping assertions relative to the effects of the poor-laws, and to the picture which you give us of the people of the two countries so much in favour of the Irish. You told your cheering audience, that the poor-laws made *slaves* of the English working-people ; that it completely *destroyed their character for independence* ; that you preferred the *wild merriment* of the Irishman to the *half-sulky, half-miserable tones* of the English *slave* to the poor-laws ; that the Irishman certainly had his *distresses* [indeed !], but then he had his *hopes* [of what ?] ; he endured much misery, but then he enter-

twisted expectation of redress! Here, it seems, there was “great cheering;” and well there might, if the matter conveyed *surprise as agreeable* to your audience as it does to me. Well, then, here you wipe away the heavy charge of our poor “half-sulky, half-miserable,” slaves having made the Irish *poor!* And if this really be the state of the Irish people (and who can doubt it since you say it is); if they have those cheering hopes and flowery expectations; if they save in youth where-withal to support them in age; if they have dispensaries in all the villages, and hospitals in all the county towns; and if they be (as under such happy circumstances they naturally must be) *wild in merriment*; this being (as we now know it is) their state, then, upon my word, if they still come here to mock with their mirth our poor, “half-sulky” souls, I shall be for giving their hides a little flogging, *a la Shrewsbury*; for “United Kingdom” here, or “United Kingdom” there, they are not to come here with their “wild merriment,” and taunt us with our “half-miserable” tones! However, when I get upon the same floor with you, we will soon make an equitable adjustment as to *this* matter, at any rate. You shall move and I will second a bill, which, when it become a law, shall be called the *Act of Reciprocity*, giving you power to whip all the “half-miserable” English slaves that go to Ireland, and me power to whip all the youths of “wild merriment” that come to England. This would set all to rights in a trice: you would preserve your “green island” from the contagion of the *sulks*; and if I did not clear ours of the “wild merriment,” there should be neither whalebone nor whipcord left in England.

But now let us (and soberly, if it be possible) take a more minute look at these general assertions made by you. They, taken, fairly and without exaggeration, amount to this: that the English poor-laws *degrade* a people, destroy all *independence of spirit*, and, in fact, *make them slaves*. Before I come to ask you, how these assertions are sustained by the comparative condition and character and manners of the English and the Irish, you will, perhaps, permit me to ask you how *Moses* came to make such ample provision for the indigent poor; how *THE APOSTLES* came to do the same, and to establish the *order of Deacons* for the express purpose of superintending the tables at which the poor were relieved; how the *CATHOLIC CHURCH* came to receive all lands and other real property, as well as gifts in money, *in the name of the poor*, and in no other name; how *THAT CHURCH* came to allot one-third part of the tithes to the poor, which in Ireland, you say, the Pro-

testant parsons "filched" from them: you will, perhaps, permit me to ask you how all this came to be, if *poor-laws*, that is to say, *regular relief to the indigent*, have a natural tendency to degrade, break down the spirit, and enslave men; for, mind, the act of Old Betsy only came to supply the place of the *certain and regular parochial relief*, before secured to the people by the *statute* as well as the *common* and the *canon law*. You will, I dare say, answer, by saying, that if Moses, the Apostles, St. Austin, Pope Gregory, and the makers of *Magna Charta*, had been aware of the manifold blessings of stinking shell-fish, sea-weed, nettles, and *agitation*, they would have made an exception as to the "*green island*." Well, but the mere *colour* cannot signify much in such a case; and then let me ask you, whether you deem the people of the *United States of America* to be *degraded*, destitute of *independent spirit*, and *slaves*?

Now, Sir, to be serious for a little; though a *lawyer*, it was no duty incumbent on you to know the laws of the *United States of America*; but, as a *gentleman* and *man of learning*, it might be expected of you, that you understood something of the laws of a country of so much importance; and, as a *legislator* of this kingdom, so very extensively, in various ways, connected with that republic, give me leave to think that it was *your duty* to know something of the principal laws in force in a country, the freedom and prosperity of which, have become subjects of so much admiration throughout the civilized world. Yet, that you know nothing of those laws, more than you do of the laws of the Cherokee nation of savages, is certain; otherwise it is impossible that you could have put forth, even in Dublin, this sweeping reprobation of the English *poor-laws*; seeing that the famous act of the 43rd year of *ELIZABETH* is in full force in every state of that republic, and that it is acted upon in the most kind and attentive manner. I cannot speak positively, but I think, that we could not pay less than *fifty thousand dollars a year*, in poor-rates, in the city of Philadelphia, thirty-two years ago. I dare say, that the poor-rates of the city of New York now amount to more than a *hundred thousand dollars a year*. Both cities have *poor-houses* of prodigious dimensions; and, which will doubtless fill you with indignation, the youths of "*wild-merriment*" are the most numerous and most permanent inmates of the "*naked cells*" of those poor-houses! Many a score dollars have I myself paid for the *relief* of the *merry* lads and lasses, in both those *unmane* cities, and never grudged so to do; and many a pound have I paid for the *relief* of similar *merry* persons at

KENSINGTON; but *not without grudging*, knowing well, that what I pay, in this way, is, in reality, given to the crafty and hard-hearted landlords of Ireland. I never lived in any place in America without paying poor-rate. And it even happened, when I lived in Long Island, the *overseer* of our township (North HEMPSTEAD) came and took a servant girl away to her township (FLUSHING), she being in a state which the delicacy demanded by Irish ears forbids me to name. We being greatly in want of the services of the girl, I begged hard for a respite for a few days; but the ex-officio guardian of the morals and the money of the township was inexorable: "Mr. Cawbut "comes from old England; Mr. Cawbut must *know the law*, " and Mr. Cawbut must know that the law *must be obeyed*;" and, with that, he put her into his cart, and away he took her and married her, I hope, to a very good husband. So, you see, Sir, that you have, in this memorable piece of intense eloquence, wasted a great deal of very fine indignation upon a very common-place subject.

However, to give you something beyond these assertions of mine, let me first inform you, that, some years ago, several parishes, in the east of Sussex, sent out, at their expense, to *New York*, divers families, who, from their numerousness, were greatly burdensome to those parishes; and, some years before that, some farmers went out, from the same neighbourhood, also to *New York*. They sent home letters to their relations, giving an account of the country, and of their situation, and, generally, beseeching their fathers and mothers and brethren and friends to follow them. I, hearing of this, and wishing to dissuade *English people* from going, if they did go abroad, from going to any other country but the United States, went down into Sussex, saw the parties who had received the letters, got them from them (I have them now), and published them in any little work called "*The EMIGRANT'S GUIDE*," which every member of both Houses of Parliament, and especially my Lord GREY, *ought to read*, and particularly the letters of these excellent people *the labourers of Sussex*. If I had never cared about English labourers before, these letters would have riveted them to my heart. Affectionate parents, dutiful children, lovers of their country: there are *all* the virtues here! And these are the people whom the garret-lodged prigs of the London newspapers call "*ignorant peasantry*," and Mr. Sheil called "*Kentish boors*!" But, the interesting thing at present is, what did *these people* say about *poor-laws in America*?

Now, Sir, do, pray, look at the *little book*. If I were at

home, I would send you a copy. Look first, impage 92, at a letter from Farmer BENJAMIN FOWLE, addressed to his cousin, DANIEL FOWLE, of SMARDEN, in Kent, and dated from UTICA, in the State of New York. He is describing to his cousin the happy state of the country; and he thus speaks of the poor-laws: "I have been poor-master of this town for many years, and I find it a rare thing for a resident to become an annual town-charge." But, strangers and temporary poor, he had frequently. Then he adds, that he knows of no one who takes the trouble to lock his doors by night. So, you see, honesty and virtue can co-exist with old Betty's law, which, you say, degrades people and destroys their character and makes them slaves! But what the labourers say on the subject, in their letters, is still more interesting, and more to the point. Look at pages 55 and 58. The writer is STEPHEN WATSON, jun., of SADDLECOMB, near Battle, in Sussex; and I got the letter from his father, who now lives at Saddlecomb, and whose name is also STEPHEN WATSON. In his letter, dated at ALBANY, 5th Oct., 1823, he tells his father this: "Do not make yourselves uneasy about us; for if we cannot get a living here, here is a poor-house, just the same as in ENGLAND." Oh! "the slave of the poor-laws!" Then, on the 29th of March, he, beginning his letter with "Honoured father and mother," writes thus: "The laws of this country are as good as in England: the poor are well taken care of: there is a large house in this place for the accommodation of the old and infirm that are not able to work." The hole wasted scene, for the work was always plenty.

How different, Sir the American patriots and legislators are from you! You will, by no means, have a provision for the aged, lest it should cause laziness and improvidence in youth, and lest it should deprive parents of the aid and the affectionate attachment of their children! How wide the difference between the American and the Irish philosophy! STEPHEN WATSON, who calls his father and mother "honoured," and who, I'll be bound for him never said "your banner" to any man in all his life, does not, you see, seem to think that poor-laws make "slaves." He says, "the laws of this country are as good as in England." And why? Because the poor are well taken care of, and because there is a poor-house.

Now, Sir, will you acknowledge that you have, done wrong to English poor-laws and English labourers? You will not? Very well, then, I will proceed, and go right forward into your comparative estimate of the character and condition of the

English and the Irish working people. And, in the way of preface, let us have *your own description* of Ireland, and of its people, as published in your address to the Irish nation, dated at Dublin, on the 6th of this month.

I begin with calling your attention to these *truths*:-

FIRST, That there is not on the face of the globe a more *fertile country* than ours, nor any one that produces, for its extent, such a *superabundance of all the prime necessities for the food, clothing, and comfort of its inhabitants*.

SECONDLY, That no country is so well circumstanced for general commerce as ours; we are at the western extreme of Europe, with a direct navigation to every maritime state in Europe, whilst our connexion with Asia and Africa is by open ocean space; and with the free American republics our intercourse may be the most direct, rapid, and unconfined.

THIRDLY, Our *green island* is indented by spacious roadsteads, magnificent bays and estuaries, and capacious harbours—harbours *open at every hour of every tide*, and *sheltered from every wind*, and *secure from every tempest*.

FOURTHLY, Our *fertile island*, too, is extensively intersected by navigable rivers; and the hard and durable materials of which our roads are, or may be formed, would easily afford the means of ready communication and speedy intercourse with every part of our productive soil.

FIFTHLY, The streams that rush from our *majestic mountains*, or sweep with abundant and rapid course through our *green and glorious valleys*, give a superabundant multitude of *mill sites*, and afford the *cheapest and most healthful power for the working of manufactures* in the known world.

SIXTHLY, Our climate is genial and conducive to *long life* and *manly vigour*. No parching suns scorch our plains into aridity, or our people into decrepitude. No chilling frosts destroy the power of vegetation; or thin our population by the pinching blight of excessive cold.

SEVENTHLY, This *lovely land* is inhabited by a people *brave* as they are *patient*, *generous* as they are *hardy*, *good-humoured* as they are *laborious*, *intelligent*, numerous almost beyond the number of the oppressions they are made to endure. Suffering woes themselves, they are full of active and *practical compassion* for the poor and the needy; and, above all, they are a people deeply impressed with all the sincerity of religious belief, and with the incalculable value of religious practices. Differing as many of them do with each other upon *various points of faith*, they one and all scorn and *detest* infidelity; and the infidel or the atheist, if he were to rear his *detested head* amongst us, would find that speedy punishment from universal opinion which would render the inflictions of law needless, and would anticipate and *supersede all legal punishment*.

My countrymen, these *truths are undeniable*. Such is a faint sketch of Ireland and her population. Why are the blessings of God perverted? How are the generous and noble impulses of man blighted! Why is Ireland in a state of *decrepitude and decay*? Why are her towns in general *dwindling into villages*? Why are

her villages so frequently disappearing? Why are her farmers emigrating, or sinking into labourers? Why are her labourers almost unemployed, or wholly starving?

Well, then, as far as the seven heads of description go, here is a *heaven upon earth*; and these are all "*truths undeniable*." So that, if we do not find the Irish labourers better in character and condition than the English, we shall have find no argument against the poor laws. But before I enter on the comparison, I feel my attention forcibly arrested by a *sentiment* in the 7th paragraph, and by an *assertion* in the last of all; and on these I must remark before I go an inch farther. In the 7th paragraph, you, in the excess of your religious zeal, condemn the "*infidel*" to a popular punishment, *superseding the operations of the law* (that is to say, to *knocking on the head*), if he dare to raise that "*detested head*" in the "*green island*;" and yet, only about two years ago, *you were perfectly clamorous* for putting the *worst of all infidels*, the *Jews*, *upon the bench and in the King's Council*; infidels who not only raise their "*detested head*," but who raise their horrible voices also, to declare *Jesus Christ* to have been "*an impostor*," and who, amongst the blasphemous rites of their *synagogues*, are said to *crucify him in effigy* twice in the year! In short, two years ago, *you were for unchristianizing the country by law*, and now *you are for knocking the infidel on the head*, without judge or jury! Now, could this subject have had your "*daily thoughts, nightly musings, and morning meditations*," in *both cases*?

The *assertion* to which I have alluded, and which is in the last paragraph, is this: "that the *towns* of Ireland are "*dwinding into villages*, and that its *villages* are *frequently disappearing*." Compare this *assertion* with the *oath* that you made before the committees of the House of Lords in 1825; namely, that the population of Ireland had been, and still was, *prodigiously increasing*, and that a *surplus population* was *one of the causes of the misery of the people*! That was your *oath*, or words, I pledge myself, *fully to that effect*. Which statement are we, then, to *believe*? Will you say that this dismal decay of towns and villages has taken place *since 1825*? Hardly; for, then, we shall ask you what are become of your splendid promises of *prosperity to Ireland* which *Emancipation* was to give? And (more serious still!) where are those "*nine millions*," and that "*growing importance*," which you put forward as the ground of Ireland's claim to an *equality with England*?

And now, Sir, let your Dublin audience remain to clap hands; and huzza, while you and I enter on that comparison which you have provoked, of the relative character and condition and manners of the Irish lads of "wild merriment," and the "English sulky slaves of the poor-laws."

First of all, it is of importance to observe that, as to the means which are the *gift of God*, the Irish have, from your own account, greatly the advantage over the English. For, while you assert that there is not on the *face of the globe*; a country more fertile than Ireland, it is well known that there are many more fertile than England; for, though, by incessantly scratching and tumbling it about, we do make it produce a good deal; still, when you come to your "majestic mountains," pouring down streams into "glorious valleys, there to set endless mills and manufactories" into motion, and that, too, in promoting of "health" at the same time; when you come to these, you make us feel our inferiority; and, above all, on the score of *greenness*, in which respect you appear to surpass us beyond all comparison. There are, indeed, persons not so devotedly and exclusively attached to this particular *colour*; and, for instance, I have no objection, nay, I like, to see a part and a great part of a country *brown*; and, at one time of the year, white. You, however, deem *greenness* the mark of perfection; and, you *have it*: the "English people" have not robbed the Irish of *that*, at any rate. Again, we have indeed "harbours" too; but not, like you, harbours "open at every hour of every tide, and sheltered from every wind, and secure from every tempest." We are obliged to wait for the tides, whether coming in or going out; and, with all our moorings and double moorings, our ships are frequently driven on the beach, or out to sea. These toils and dangers are, it seems, unknown to Ireland, to the people of which "lovely land" the proverb of "time and tide waiting for no man" must be wholly without a meaning.

But, Sir, now comes your great difficulty; for, if these, which you have given us here, be "*truly undeniable*"; if such be the natural resources and advantages of Ireland; if no spot of the globe exceed her in fertility; if she be favoured in the manner that you describe: and yet, if, as you say is the case, "the blessings of God are there so perverted, that she is in a state of *decrepitude and decay*, her towns *dwindling into villages*, her *villages disappearing*, and her labourers "almost unemployed, or wholly starving;" and if, as we know to be the case, her people are seen wandering over this our country (not so blessed by God) in search of food, and

in a state nearly approaching to that of actual nakedness ; and if, as you insist, poor-laws, to secure them food and clothing at home *would not better their lot* : if all this be so ; or rather, if all this *were* so, we should, like the English Grenadier of the Guards, when he landed in Virginia, be tempted to exclaim, “ *The ADAM and EVE of this people surely came out of Newgate.* ”

It will not do for you in this case to say that the “ *blessings of God have been perverted* ” by the English, until, at least, you have replied to my answer to your charge against us on that score ; and besides, the public have not already forgotten that you represented that “ *emancipation*, ” which you obtained even beyond the extent of your petitions, as *all* that Ireland wanted to make her contented and happy and everlastingly grateful to England : and that you pledged yourself that the adoption of that measure would enable the Government to draw additional millions of revenue from Ireland. We have not so soon forgotten those your a-thousand-times-repeated declarations ; and, therefore, we deny you the right to *impute to us* this “ *perversion of the blessings of God.* ”

You must, then, impute it to yourselves ; or you must confess that your country calls for that very *INSTITUTION* ; that great *English institution*, which we are now about to tender you, and which you are endeavouring to prepare your miserable countrymen to reject as a *scourge*. Look at the difference in the working people of the two countries. You have, if you *do* speak the truth, the advantage over us in climate and soil ; and you have, you say, a people “ *brave, patient, generous, hardy, good-humoured, laborious, and intelligent.* ” Yet look at the *difference in the people*, and particularly the *working people*, of the two countries ! Look at it : consider it well : here, indeed, is matter for an *Irish legislator* to think, muse, and meditate upon. When did you, or anybody else, ever see or hear of *Englishmen* prowling about, in bands of half-naked beggars, in any country upon earth : when did you ever hear of the necessity of taking *them* up by force, and carrying them like malefactors and tossing them back upon their native shores : when did you ever hear of *them* being an incumbrance to any people amongst whom they went : when, since you talk of their *hovels*, did you see or hear of English labourers being in hovels, in company with the pig, the flesh of which they were destined never to taste, both feeding on the same root, at the same board, warmed by the same chimneyless fire, and both blackened by the same smoke : when, since you talk of the “ *naked cells* ” of the poor

house, did you ever hear of thousands of *them* living on stinking shell-fish, sea-weed, and nettles, and of thousands at a time receiving the last offices of religion as preparatory to death from starvation: when, since you call *them* *slaves*, did you ever see or hear of one of *them* applying the cringing and fawning appellation of "*your hanner*" to any human being, much less to any thing, though groom or footman, from whom they expected to soak a farthing or a mouthful of bread: when did you ever hear of *English* labourers who needed, or who would *contentedly suffer*, an employer to stand over them at their work: when did you ever hear of *their* dwellings being destitute of every mark of cleanliness and of decent reserve, having about them no traces of human existence within, except the feculent heap at the door, which nature herself would call upon them to hide: when did you ever see or ever hear talk of one of *their* rural habitations, not having about it (unless rendered impossible by local circumstances) gooseberry and currant bushes, beds of parsley and other herbs, plants of wall-flower and biennial stock, clumps of polyanthus, daisies, and bulbs, and other flowers, and, where possible, plants of roses and honey-suckles, trained round their windows, or over their doors, with the greatest care and the greatest taste, of all which, together with apple-trees grafted by their own hands, and together also with *stalls* of bees, the result of their own care: there are more in a circuit, embracing ten rural parishes of England, than there are to be found in possession of all the millions of labourers that inhabit the "*lovely land*:" when, lastly (not to suffer the provocation to urge me further), did you ever see or hear of an "*English slave*" *disowning the country of his birth*, and wherever found, and under whatever circumstances, not forward to proclaim himself an *Englishman*, and to boast of *the honour of the name*?

Now, Sir, avoiding, as something too painful to encounter, a detailed exhibition of the other side, do I ascribe the *difference* to the *nature* of the Irish people, to any *inherent vice* in them? By no means. I ascribe it to the *difference* in the *treatment* received by the two people from their rulers. Not to anything *done* by England to Ireland; but to the former not having *compelled* the domestic rulers of the latter to treat the Irish working people as the English working people have been treated, during the last two centuries and a half; and particularly to its not having compelled the owners of the land in Ireland to leave enough of its produce in the several parishes, to provide for the wants of the destitute; as is effectually done in

England and America by those famous poor-laws, which BLACKSTON E truly says, are “ founded in the very *principles of civil society* ;” but the unspeakable benefit of which you are now labouring, though I trust in vain, to prevent your ill-treated, unhappy, and ever-troubled country from receiving. I allow, that, as to this matter, your efforts have received but too much countenance from those of persons in this country, who have long, and particularly since the publication of the book of the foolish and unfeeling MALTHUS, been endeavouring to chip away the meaning, intention, and effect of the poor-laws. STURGES BOURNE’S BILLS were a bold stroke ; but, the inventors, when they look at the *awful consequences*, will find little reason to congratulate themselves on their success. Those bills have already cost them ten thousand times more than the bills would have saved them in a hundred years. In 1819, the present Lord Chancellor said, that he was “ prepared to defend, to their utmost extent, the *principles of Malthus*.” He has *pledged himself* to bring in a poor-law bill *this session*, to supplant, I suppose, the bill of Lord TEYNHAM, which would in effect have repealed the hated bills of STURGES BOURNE, and have restored peace to the villages and hamlets. If the Lord Chancellor’s Bill do not lessen the *extent of the claim* on the poor-rates, it will be a tacit giving up of MALTHUS ; and, if it do, a bill to alter the succession to the crown would not be more *wild* ! Oh, no ! This law is immortal ; it has lived under all changes of dynasty, and changes of forms of government, in England and in America ; it is written in the hearts of the people, it is “ founded in the first principles of civil society ;” it makes, if duly administered, even the poorest man feel that he has an interest in all the property around him ; it is the ground, the good ground, the solid ground, but the *sole* ground, upon which the poor man is called upon to take up arms in defence of the rich ; it is, as I said before, the bond of peace, and the cement of society ; woe be unto those who shall attempt to destroy or enfeeble it in England, and the just reproach of mankind will in the end, be the inevitable lot of all who shall attempt to prevent its adoption in Ireland.

It was my intention to make some remarks on that part of your speech where you speak of the *sort of reform* which you demand for Ireland, and where you clearly enough hint at the attempts which you shall make to cause a *separation*, if the intended reform be not such as *you shall deem “ just ;”* but, not having time to do justice to this subject now, and extremely

anxious to act justly towards you, I must defer it till another opportunity; and, in the meanwhile, offering you, if you deem it worth your while to use them for the purpose, the columns of my *Register* as a vehicle for *any reply* that you may choose to give to this letter,

I remain, Sir,
Your most humble
and most obedient servant,
Wm. COBBETT.

THE END.

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